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OPINION METER

This week's poll:

Do you think it is time that Saipan enacted an anti-cruelty statute?

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INSIDE

Lee P. Webber, president and publisher of *The Honolulu Advertiser*, is the *Guam Business*' 2007 Executive of the Year.

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Peace Try

President Bush gently nudged authoritarian Arab allies Sunday to satisfy frustrated desires for democracy in the Mideast.

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New Globes

The first Golden Globe of the night went to Cate Blanchett for her supporting role in "I'm Not There."

LIFE & STYLE...Page 18

"The 16th Legislature can be the start of a new and great Commonwealth. As leaders we must be open to the thought of thinking outside the box, and trying new things. …In the coming two years, business of the Legislature cannot be as usual if we are to make a difference."

—House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios

GOP takes over House reins

Members of the 16th Legislature gather for a photo shortly after the inaugural session at the House of Representatives and Senate chambers on Capital Hill.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Seated from left, representatives Joseph James N. Camacho, House Speaker Arnold I. Palacios, and Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero. Second row from left, Oscar M. Babauta, Diego T. Benavente, Christina Marie E. Sablan, Heinz S. Hofschneider, Rosemond B. Santos and David M. Apatang. Third row from left, Stanley T. Torres, Edwin P. Aldan, Edward T. Salas, Ralph Anthony DLG. Torres, Victor B. Hocog. Ramon A. Tebuteb, Justo S. Quitugua, Joseph C. Reyes, Raymond D. Palacios, Ray N. Yumul and Francisco S. Dela Cruz,

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

From left, senators Paul A. Manglona, Luis P. Crisostomo, Jr., Paterno S. Hocog, Jude U. Hofschneider, Maria Frica T. Pangelinan, Senate President Pete P. Reyes, Felix T. Mendiola, Joseph M. Mendiola and Henry H. San Nicolas.

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

The 16th House of Representatives took their oath of office yesterday, vowing to work together in finding solutions to the Commonwealth's problems.

In a show of unity rarely seen in local politics, all 20 House members voted to install Rep. Arnold I. Palacios as speaker. They also unanimously elected Rep. Joseph Deleon Guerrero as vice speaker and Rep. Joseph James Camacho as floor leader.

The NMI Republican Party

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RELATED NEWS

- 3 new members round out 7-member BOE. **PAGE 5**
- 'Restore people's confidence in Legislature' **PAGE 11**

Paul gives way to Jude

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSISTANT EDITOR

Sen. Paul A. Manglona was already penciled in for the Senate floor leadership, but the Rota lawmaker instead recommended Sen. Jude Hofschneider to take the post before the actual inauguration at the upper house yesterday morning.

Manglona, a many time Senate president, opted to step aside

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RELATED NEWS

CUC and Fund on top of Reyes' agenda. **PAGE 2**

REPORTER'S NOTEBOOK

By Saipan Tribune staff

■ The inauguration ceremony, set to begin at 10am, was delayed by about 15 minutes due to a power outage on Capital Hill. At least one of members made a comment about it during session. "The power interruption should serve as a reminder for us of the challenges we are facing as a Commonwealth," reelected Rep. Ray Yumul said.

■ Rep. Stanley T. Torres, the

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Local

Pawnshop is 4th armed rob victim in 7 days

Man, juvenile arrested

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

A man and a juvenile were arrested shortly after they allegedly staged an armed robbery at a pawnshop in Chalan Lau Lau Friday afternoon.

Arrested were Milton Borja Camacho, 27, and a 17-year-old boy.

The robbery happened at G.E.C. Pawnshop. It was the fourth armed robbery to hit Saipan in seven days.

Department of Public Safety spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said yesterday that police responded to G.E.C. Pawnshop on Friday at 3:39pm after receiving a report about an armed robbery.

Ogumoro said that based on preliminary investigation, a masked male individual, armed with a hammer and machete, entered the pawnshop.

The masked suspect took an undetermined amount of money and several jewelry items and fled the scene aboard a car. According to the cashier and a witness, a blue sedan bearing license plate AND-562 was seen leaving the scene.

The witnesses described the person who entered the pawnshop as 5'6" tall, wearing a greed-hooded jacket, loose khaki pants with several pockets and a handkerchief to conceal his face.

Ogumoro said that, during field investigation, one of the responding patrol officers saw a four-door sedan bearing license plate AND-562 with two male occupants heading north along Middle Road in Chalan Lau Lau.

Assisting officers were called in to apply a felony stop on the car. Police pulled over the vehicle in front of Coca-Cola bottling establishment and ordered the occupants to step out.

The occupants, identified later as Camacho and the 17-year-old boy, were brought to the Department of Corrections for further processing.

Ogumoro said upon securing the vehicle, police found a khaki pants with several pockets and jewelry with tags still attached to it.

A light green sweater and a white bandana were also recovered near the crime scene.

Ogumoro said the cashier positively identified the recovered items as those stolen from the pawnshop.

On Thursday afternoon, two masked men, including one armed with a Taser gun, robbed two tourists at the Suicide Cliff in Marpi.

On Tuesday afternoon, a 65-year-old woman was injured when three unidentified men, including one armed with a Taser gun—a high-voltage stun gun—robbed her inside her house in Fina Sisu.

On Jan. 5 (Saturday), two masked men robbed the Ling Lin Store in Chalan Kanoa. One suspect was armed with a machete.

Pula not keen on taking over Cohen's post

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

David Cohen's choice for a successor is not too keen about getting the job of deputy assistant secretary for insular affairs.

Nikolao Pula, director of the U.S. Office of Insular Affairs, said he would be honored to take the position in an acting capacity, and not officially.

"It's a political job, and mine is a career job. I think I would like to stay in my career job. I would be honored if they ask me to take the job for the rest of the time," said Pula, who attended the inauguration of the 16th Legislature yesterday.

Cohen will step down from his appointed position on Jan. 31, 2008. Whoever replaces him will have one year in office before the new administration takes over the White House in January 2009.

As OIA director, Pula will automatically become the acting deputy assistant secretary when Cohen leaves. It will not be his first time to hold the position in such capacity. He held the office for 18 months before Cohen's appointment in 2002.

"Whether they are going to appoint someone else, or keep me as acting, I don't know. But I think I will learn more when I get back and discuss that with my superior," Pula said.

Pula is on island for a two-day official visit. His itinerary includes meetings with the Fitial administration and local lawmakers regarding capital improvement projects, federal grants, and other federal issues.

He said he was glad to have had the opportunity to witness the oath-taking ceremony for the 16th Legislature.

"It was my first time to be here for an opening ceremony where I could hear members of the Legislature who were elected by the people. It was very good to hear the variety of different issues that concern them.

"I think what touched me was the fact that these are very trying times in the CNMI, and yet these people had chosen to run. They didn't shy away from the fact that there are a lot of challenges with the economy and the workforce. They choose to get into the thick of things and do the best they can to help the people," Pula said.

He added he was glad to sense "a spirit of coming together" among the "young, upcoming representatives and the old, experienced folks."

"To have the commitment to work together for the benefit of the people, that was really touching," he said.

CUC, Fund top Reyes' agenda

By MARK RABAGO
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ASSISTANT EDITOR

New Senate President Pete Reyes wants the 16th Legislature to hunker down and find solutions to problems currently besetting the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. and the Northern Mariana Islands Retirement Fund.

In a speech during the inauguration ceremony at the Senate yesterday, Reyes said the people of the CNMI face difficult times and are looking at the Legislature for answers.

One such problem is the islands' utility company, Reyes said.

"Take for instance the never-ending issue we face with CUC. This Senate must endeavor to find a way to solve the problem even if we have to burn the midnight oil to do it."

The Republican lawmaker said one way of tacking the problem is for members of the upper house to focus in making the Commonwealth's power distribution system both reliable and affordable.

"I am sure that the chairman of the PUTC will make every effort to see to it that this goal is achieved by the end of the 16th Legislature. My personal ambition is to find workable and realistic solutions to the problems that have plagued CUC so that our local utility company would provide reliable power at a fair and equitable market price," he said.

Reyes added that, "our ability to provide basic human needs such as power and water is the backbone of our economy and if we are to see any progress in our islands, concerns at CUC would need to be addressed."

The Saipan lawmaker also took issue with how the Retirement Fund is being run.

"Our government retirees face uncertainty about their future. Their pensions are threatened and those who completed the journey and are in retirement are now unsure if there will be anything left for them after many years of faithful service to us," he said.

He said the new Senate will work with the governor and the House of Representatives to assure that responsible board members and Fund administrators will reach common ground and reestablish credibility to the system.

"We will explore viable recommendations and suggestions and trust that the administration will extend the same effort to the Legislature. Our common economic crisis affects each of us and the Retirement Fund would need to demonstrate its willingness to participate in cost-cutting measures," he added.

The new Senate president also said he will make education paramount in the Senate's agenda the next two years.

"While it is true that great nations are recognized by their economic and political prosperity, I believe that a nation can only become great when it commits to investing in the education of its children," he said.

Reyes said the Commonwealth's Public School System and the Northern Marianas College must build a skilled and ready workforce, "something that we really need to refocus our efforts in supporting. We will reevaluate our priorities and attend to the business of investing in our children."

The Republican lawmaker also wants the CNMI to start strengthening its relationship with the U.S. Congress and the federal government, "to ensure that federal legislations will not have an overly adverse effect on the welfare on the people of the Commonwealth."

He added that Section 902 of the Covenant agreement should always take precedence whenever serious differences occur between the federal government and the CNMI government.

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Fitial to CUC: Renegotiate Mobil contract

By AGNES E. DONATO
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REPORTER

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial ordered the Commonwealth Utilities Corp. yesterday to open talks with its supplier to possibly reduce the cost of power generation fuel.

Fitial's directive was issued in line with the state of disaster emergency declaration for CUC.

"I hereby authorize the executive director of the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation, Anthony C. Guerrero, to meet with Mobil Oil Marianas to discuss and renegotiate the applicability of and any necessary amendments to the terms of the CUC's fuel supply contract, in order to reduce the fuel costs paid by the people of the Commonwealth," Fitial wrote.

The governor said earlier that $5 million had been reprogrammed from local funds to subsidize CUC's fuel costs since December 2007.

In a report to the Legislature, he noted that the issue of fuel storage capacity and ownership must be addressed so the CNMI can minimize the duration and effect of the economic disruptions caused by high oil prices.

He noted that previous contracts entered into by CUC have provided for exclusive use of storage facilities on Rota and Tinian for Mobil.

He said this restricted CUC's ability to negotiate a long-term fuel supply contract with suppliers other than Mobil because such an agreement could not guarantee fuel to Rota and Tinian.

The Fitial administration has applied and received approval for a technical assistance grant from the U.S. Department of the Interior to provide funding for a feasibility study for a petroleum farm facility in the CNMI inclusive of all three major islands. JET Consulting Services had been hired to conduct the research project.

CUC was placed under a state of emergency on Dec. 5, 2007. The declaration was extended for 30 days on Jan. 4, 2008.

The state of emergency declaration allows the governor to assume full control of CUC and suspend all regulatory statute provisions and regulations applicable to CUC, including procurement regulations. The governor will also have the power to reprogram all available funds to address CUC's problems.

More outages as repairs on engines continue

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

Many areas on Saipan experienced power outages yesterday as emergency repairs continue at Saipan Power Plant 1 in Lower Base and at Power Plant 4 in Puerto Rico, and that rotating outages may be implemented until Wednesday.

Commonwealth Utilities Corp. spokesperson Pamela Mathis told *Saipan Tribune* that the outage began yesterday at 8:30am along Beach Road in Garapan.

Mathis said at 9am the outage went to China Town in the Taro Sue and Miha areas.

"There were individual businesses taken out—hotels, garment factories that are still in operation, major banks, the Horiguchi Building, the Marianas Business Plaza, Standord Hotel, the CUC building," Mathis said.

Power was restored in those establishments at 2pm when CUC was able to repair the other power generator.

"With the other generator up and with conservation we did not need to take Feeder 4 and 7. But the Power Plant tells me that they are quite confident that with the night time peak they will definitely have to take [out] those grids beginning at 6pm," Mathis said.

She said there was a total of three down engines yesterday—two in Power Plant 1 and one in Power Plant 4.

After working for more than 16 hours since Thursday, crews at CUC were successful yesterday in restoring one of two failed generators at Power Plant 1, Mathis said.

These crews, she said, continued the emergency repairs on another generator as well as repairs on a unit at Power Plant 4.

"As these emergency repairs continue at the two Saipan power plants, the loss of energy production causes limited and rotating outages. The energy today [Monday] is at a minimum five megawatts—the equivalent electric usage of three major hotels or three residential villages," Mathis said.

All major customers who have generators have assisted CUC by going off of the island grid to limit widespread outages.

But Mathis said even with the help of these major commercial clients, additional energy savings or outages were required yesterday and possibly until Wednesday.

Beautify CNMI meets several goals in 2007

By ANGELO VILLAGOMEZ
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CORRESPONDENT

In 2007 Beautify CNMI challenged everyone in the Marianas to donate one day of volunteer service to their environmental campaign to make the islands a better place to live and visit.

On average, three or four volunteer events occurred each weekend with over 100 people volunteering most weeks. The biggest events in 2007 were the monthly cleanups of Garapan, where over 100 people would regularly participate. The cleanups of the Navy Hill Lighthouse were also very popular. The single largest cleanup of the year was the NMDOA- and JSTA-sponsored cleanup of Obyan Beach. Over 250 people participated.

During an interview in January 2007, Beautify CNMI told the media that in 2007 they were going to set out to create an Animal Welfare committee, continue tree plantings and cleanups, hold Managaha recycling and Beautiful Village contests, hold a tree care workshop, support the Micronesia Challenge, and start removing junk cars.

While the two contests never really made it off the drawing board and although the junk car removal program has yet to start, a tree care workshop was held last January for 15 government employees from the Commonwealth Utilities Corp., Department of Public Works, Division of Parks & Recreation, and CNMI Forestry and a Micronesia Challenge Summer Camp was held in June for PSS students.

An Animal Welfare committee was created, and although it was unable to lobby for passage of an animal cruelty bill, it organized Saipan's first Island Boonie Dog Show, coordinated the first St. Francis of Assisi celebration, and make dozens of pet care presentations to local school children, including every student at Dan Dan Elementary.

There were also dozens of tree plantings and cleanups all year. They were the most successful programs of 2007.

Almost 200 Flame Trees were planted in Koblerville, Dan Dan, Garapan, and Marpi with the Adopt-a-Flame Tree program and there were cleanups all over the island almost every single weekend.

Groups such as Shirley's Coffee Shop, MINA, CNMI Power, DEQ, Dive Marianas, Pala Potu, Team Chura Talu, Office of Representative Kaipat, Office of Representative Waki, PIC and Friends of the Mariana Islands adopted a beach or a road and volunteered to clean it up at least once a month.

Additionally, certain groups, such as Isa CNMI, S.A.V.E, RC&D, MINA, SDA, PDM Promoters, Kinpachi Restaurant, Aqua Resort Club and the Church of Latter Day Saints volunteered to help out on a regular basis whenever another group was hosting a cleanup.

Beautify CNMI also depended on individual volunteers like Adam and Juanita Sablan and family, Walt Goodridge, and Capt. Carl Brachear to help out with volunteer events, while people like Ruth Tighe, Cinta Kaipat, Katie Busenkell, Steve Hiney provided help behind the scenes.

The corporate sponsors are too many to list, but notable are Aqua Resort Club which donated several thousand dollars, Bank of Guam and Shirley's which helped pay for a trailer, PTI, which donates a volunteer hotline, and MINA, which coordinates most of the volunteer events. Tasi Tours and Grand Hotel also donated.

Angelo Villagomez is the executive director of MINA.

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Diplomatic Security Service probes marriage scams

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
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REPORTER

The Diplomatic Security Service is actively investigating marriage scams in the CNMI due to a sudden influx of U.S. passport applications, according to federal court documents.

Diplomatic Security Service Special Agent Lando Sales stated in court documents that on Nov. 1, 2007, because of the influx of U.S. passport applications executed by Saipan-born families claiming marriage to Bangladeshi males, DSS initiated an investigation on the island to determine the veracity of these marriage claims.

Sales made the disclosure in the U.S. government's complaint filed against Rose Mayo Reyes.

Reyes, who allegedly engaged in a fake marriage with a Bangladeshi man in order for him to obtain an Immediate Relative status, was also charged in federal court. Reyes was charged with false statement in the application and use of a passport.

The complaint against Reyes was filed under seal in the U.S. District Court for the NMI on Dec. 7, 2007. But chief judge Alex R. Munson unsealed the case yesterday at the request of the U.S. Attorney's Office.

Sales said that in his review of one application, he learned that on Oct. 17, 2007, Reyes executed an application for a U.S. Passport at the U.S. Passport Office in Saipan.

In her application, Reyes stated that on May 9, 2007, she married an individual identified as Mohamad Ruhul Amin, born Oct. 20, 1976, in Bangladesh.

Sales said that, in his interview with Reyes, the defendant stated that Amin approached her sometime in 2007 with an offer of marriage. Reyes stated that the purpose of the marriage was to allow Amin to be gainfully employed and remain on Saipan as the spouse of a U.S. citizen, and for Reyes to receive $400 cash and other material items such as food, clothes and a cellular phone.

Sales said the defendant stated that she is currently in a relationship with a Saipan-born male and that she has two children from this person. The special agent said that Reyes resides with her family in Tanapag, while Amin stays in Garapan. "Reyes further stated that when she married Amin, she married him strictly for financial gain on her part, and for Amin to receive an Immediate Relative permit that would allow Amin to be gainfully employed and remain on Saipan," Sales said.

REPORTER'S

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most senior member of the 16th House of Representatives, acted as speaker pro tempore at the organizational session.

■ Rep. Heinz Hofschneider, one of the three former speakers sitting in the 16th House, nominated Rep. Arnold I. Palacios for speaker. Hofschneider wanted the vote to be done by acclamation, but Rep. Stanley T. Torres insisted on a roll call. Palacios got the unanimous vote of the House.

■ Rep. Stanley T. Torres, probably the governor's staunchest critic in the House, was one of the two lawmakers sent to inform the governor that the House was organized and ready to conduct business with the administration. He went with first-time Rep. Ralph Anthony Torres.

■ Rep. Stanley T. Torres broke the ice several times during the inauguration ceremony. Once he did it with an odd request: to allow photographers to roam around the chamber. After being asked to notify the governor of the House's organization, he asked newly installed Speaker Arnold Palacios in jest, "Are you ordering us now?"

■ "Man, it feels great to be back," was how Rep. David Apatang began his inauguration speech. Apatang returns to the Legislature following his failed bid for lieutenant governor in the 2005 election.

■ Rep. Diego Benavente, also a failed candidate for lieutenant governor in 2005, echoed Apatang's sentiment, saying "I missed my job."

■ Both Speaker Arnold Palacios and Vice Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero came to the oath-taking ceremony with a cold. A visibly sick Deleon Guerrero, who spoke briefly during session, said he "decided to forego the traditional lengthy speech" because of his cold.

■ Rep. Raymond Palacios was the only lawmaker to thank the Board of Elections for the conduct of the 2007 midterm election. A first-time representative, Palacios barely made it to the House. He won over former Rep. Manuel Tenorio by three votes after the recount.

■ "August body" seems to be the new lawmakers' favorite phrase when referring to the Lower House. Floor Leader Joseph Camacho used the phrase four times during his speech, Rep. Victor Hocog twice, and Speaker Arnold Palacios once.

■ Pledging openness to suggestions and criticisms, Rep. Tina Sablan announced her contact details in her speech. Her mobile phone number is 483-3935. Her email address is tinasablan@gmail.com.

■ Rep. Heinz Hofschneider spoke the longest during session. He took the floor for 18 minutes, speaking first in Chamorro and then in English. His speech focused on immigration federalization.

■ Not one, not two, but three House members had to request another chance on the floor, as they forgot to thank their wives sitting behind them. They were Reps. Victor Hocog, Heinz Hofschneider, and David Apatang. Their defense: they were too eager to get down to business.

■ At the closing of the special session, new Floor Leader Joseph James Norita Camacho said he wants it on the record that all 20 members of the House recognized their respective spouse in their remarks.

■ New Senate President Pete Reyes apologized to family and friends of the re-elected senators of the 16th Legislature as well as the 50-60 crowd in attendance for the absence of the inauguration lunch. The lunch usually follows the swearing of new members of the Senate. He said the budget constraints prevented them from holding the traditional event.

■ Senate President Pete Reyes expressed his sincerest thanks and admiration to outgoing Senate president, Sen. Joseph Mendiola, for his outstanding leadership during the 15th Legislature. He said during trying times, Sen. Mendiola was able to build consensus where controversy reigned. Sen. Reyes added that Sen. Mendiola treated each senator with respect and said the Senate honors his leadership and "how he conducted his business in a professional and courteous manner that fostered cooperation and collaboration."

■ Near the end of his speech, Senate President Pete Reyes reminded everyone that he is the first Saipan lawmaker to hold the position the past 10 years.

■ Senate clerk Doris Bermudez, who was in-charge of Senate inauguration ceremony, borrowed 36 woodcarvings from the Arts and Culture Office to give the proceedings an island theme. The woodcarvings were used as the centerpiece of the Senate floor as well as adorned the U-shaped table of the lawmakers.

■ Senate President Pete Reyes and Sen. Luis Crisostomo's speeches were easily the longest, while Sen. Henry San Nicolas delivered his in less than two minutes and was in the vernacular.

■ Sen. Luis Crisostomo said he would have wanted to challenge Senate President Pete Reyes for the leadership but didn't have time to campaign for votes because he had to attend to a more serious matter—waiting for the absentee votes to come in to assure him of his reelection.

■ Sen. Paul Manglona began his speech by pulling out a Jan. 15, 1998 edition of the *Marianas Variety*. He said the issues and problems that beset the CNMI 20 years ago are essentially the same as today's.

■ Sen. Jude Hofschneider said in his speech that he wants the administration to come up with a 2018 comprehensive economic master plan. He also hopes that lawmakers from Saipan would finally listen to their people and allow Tinian and Rota to develop their gaming industry. He appealed to them to "give us a chance to shine!"

■ Upon his election by acclamation as Senate floor leader, a giddy Sen. Jude Hofschneider said he was both elated and excited about the opportunity to be the floor leader of the 16th Senate. Asked if it came a surprise, he quipped, "Nothing is better than the element of surprise."

■ Sen. Joseph M. Mendiola pointed out he noticed the familiar words "work together" during the inauguration. After Mendiola made the observation, at least two other senators also used "work together" in their respective remarks. At the House's inauguration, many representatives also mentioned "work together" in their brief speeches.

■ The gallery areas at the Senate and House were filled with family members, friends, and supporters. Many reserved seats in both chambers were, however, unoccupied as the guests did not show up.

■ At the Board of Education swearing-in at the Multi-Purpose Center, the CNMI PSS JROTC Program conducted a joint color guard. The color guard, under the auspices of Master Sergeant John Salas, helped prepare the Center on Saturday for the ceremony.

■ The color guard consisted of four cadets representing four of the five high schools hosting JROTC Programs within the CNMI. The Color Guard Commander was cadet Capt. Ayuyu Angelo of Kagman High School. Color guard members included cadet Maj. Alfred Manlulu of Tinian High School, cadet SFC Ecalnea Tristan of Saipan Southern High School and Cadet SFC Edward Dela Cruz of Marianas High School.

■ Cadet 1st Lt. Elisa Taiscan of Rota High School was selected by the Director of Army Instruction to sing the U.S. National and CNMI Anthems but, unfortunately, could not make the trip due to airline difficulties. Former cadet and Marianas High School graduate Joan Liwanag volunteered to sing the anthems and did a superb job.

■ While everyone on stage wore formal black ensembles, outgoing teacher representatives Ambrose Bennett stood out in his carnation pink outfit.

PAUL

From Page 1

and allow the youthful Hofschneider from Tinian to be a part of the leadership to ensure a smooth working relationship at the Senate.

"This morning I informed the president and the members [about the decision to give up the post]. I see the spirit of cooperation and the spirit of working together when we are faced with this very tough economic times," he said.

Manglona said all three islands—Saipan, Tinian, and Rota—need to work together and one way of making sure this happens is if all three islands are represented in the Senate leadership.

Senate President Pete Reyes represents the Third Senatorial District of Saipan, while Senate Vice President Felix Mendiola represents the First Senatorial District of Rota.

Hofshneider, Reyes and Mendiola as well as Legislative Secretary Sen. Maria Frica Pangelinan, who is also from Saipan, were all voted by acclamation.

Manglona added that he has the utmost confidence in Hoffschneider. He said the Republican lawmaker is very hardworking and aggressive and has the people's best interest in his heart.

Hofschneider said he would like to thank Manglona for stepping aside and allowing him to take the post of Senate floor leader.

"I would like to thank Sen. Paul… actually he's been bringing up the issue but I just never pushed it because I believed the composition of the leadership was fine," he said. "I'm humbled by the fact that he believed in me. That he also believed in the diversification of the islands—the three main islands: Saipan, Tinian, and Luta."

Associate Justice Alexandro Castro swore in the nine members of the Senate, who were all incumbents and won re-election during the Nov. 3 mid-term elections. The oath was delivered in the Chamorro language.

Others sworn in during yesterday's inauguration ceremony were the Senate President of the 15th Legislature, Joseph Mendiola of Tinian, Sen. Paterno Hocog of Rota, Henry San Nicolas of Tinian, and Luis Crisostimo Jr. of Saipan.

Dignitaries and VIPs also abounded during the event as Guam Sen. David Shimizu, ex-Bank of Guam official Lou Leon Guerrero, Northern Marianas College president Carmen Fernandez, Board of Education's Lucy Maratita, former Speaker Jose P. Lifoifoi, former representatives Malua Peter and Benny Sablan, Associate Judge Ramona Manglona, and Washington Representative Pete A. Tenorio were in attendance. Rev. Fr. Isaac Ayuyu started the proceedings with a solemn prayer.

GOP

From Page 1

now controls the Lower House, which has 20 members for the first time. A court order increased the House members from 18 to 20 last year.

The newly installed House made history for having three attorneys as members, and possibly the most members under 50 years old.

Three formers speakers—Reps. Oscar M. Babauta, Diego T. Benavente, and Heinz Hofschneider—are currently sitting in the House.

Speaker Palacios said he was "both humbled and honored" by the opportunity to serve as speaker of the 16th House. He said his main goal for the next two years is to restore the people's confidence in government.

As specific goals, he cited finding a solution to high power rates, maximizing federal funds for infrastructure building, promoting tourism, attracting new foreign investment to the islands, promoting education, and forging an improved relationship with the federal government.

Palacios also stressed the need for change.

"The 16th Legislature can be the start of a new and great Commonwealth. As leaders we must be open to the thought of thinking outside the box, and trying new things. I say this because in the coming two years, business of the legislature cannot be as usual if we are to make a difference," he said.

Former House Speaker Oscar M. Babauta is the new minority leader, having been chosen by his fellow Covenant Party members, Reps. Francisco Dela Cruz, Raymond Palacios, and Edwin Aldan, as well as Democrat Rep. Justo Quitugua and independent Rep. Victor Hocog.

Each member of the new minority bloc pledged to support Palacios and work with the House leadership.

Rep. Tina Sablan, who has not aligned herself with any faction in the House, expressed hope the cooperation displayed at the inauguration would continue throughout the two-year term of the 16th House. The youngest House member called on her colleagues to set aside partisan politics and "to rise above the pettiness that has characterized local politics over the years."

Rep. Francisco Dela Cruz, the self-described "maverick" of the 15th House, expressed a similar sentiment. He vowed to make decisions based on his personal values, rather than party lines.

3 new members round out 7-member BOE

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
Rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

CNMI Supreme Court associate justice Alexander Castro administered yesterday the oath of office for three new members to the 11th State Board of Education at the Multi-Purpose Center yesterday.

Saipan representatives Galvin S. Deleon Guerrero and Marylou S. Ada and Rota representative Denise Tanya King were sworn in yesterday to round out the seven-member board.

Returning board members include incoming chairwoman Lucia Blanco-Maratita, Herman Guerrero, non-public school representative Scott L. Norman, and student representative Louvele Borja.

In a speech, Blanco-Maratita quoted President Theodore Roosevelt: "We cannot always prepare the future for our youth; but we can always prepare the youth for the future."

"This is especially true considering all the uncertainties concerning the CNMI and will likely to continue to face our youth in the future," said Blanco-Maratita.

"The only certainty that we have," she said, "is that we must educate our children to equip them with appropriate skills and knowledge to prepare them to face these uncertainties."

She said each member would have to contribute his or her talent, focus, skills, expertise, commitment, and passion to fulfill the constitutional mandate.

She believes that the three new board members will bring to the table the necessary qualities they will need to bear the crucial responsibilities of the board.

Education Commissioner Dr. David Borja spoke on the need improve the educational process of the Public School System in order to make the students become more productive individuals in the community.

"No parent wants their child to not be prepared for success, be it for college, for work or a combination of both. We need to do that. It is paramount in our mission," said Borja.

Outgoing chairman Roman Benavente, in an interview, expressed support for the new board members and wished them luck in their endeavors.

He added that he will let the people decide if he has fulfilled his duties during the time he chaired the board.

"It is a very honorable position but it is time that I move on with my family," said Benavente.

All outgoing board members—Benavente, Marja Lee Taitano, teacher rep Ambrose Bennett, and Dino Jones—were given appreciation plaques.

Members of the 11th BOE will be holding their first special board meeting today, at 9am. The board is expected to elect its new set of officers.

SWEARING IN RITES CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gov. Benigno R. Fitial chats with the members of the Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council before the swearing-in ceremony yesterday morning. Other picture shows Fitial administering the oath of office for the Tinian Municipal Council members. The governor administered the oath for both councils yesterday, before proceeding to the inauguration of the 16th Legislature.

Municipal Council seeks SNILD help in funding cultural center

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
Rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Ninth Saipan and Northern Municipal Council is seeking help and support from the Saipan and Northern Islands Legislative Delegation in financing the construction of the Saipan Cultural and Performing Arts Center for the Chamorro Cultural and Linguistic Revitalization Project.

In a letter to Senate President Pete Reyes, council member Antonia M. Tudela stated that, "It is important for us to make what is left of the indigenous values or host culture sustainable in the face of myriad and often conflicting external influences."

She said elected leaders should not only talk about the indigenous culture and language preservation and protection, "but more importantly in the promotion and perpetuation of our collaborative values and identity as a people of our homeland."

With this, Tudela said there is need to build a center to show off the island's history, legends and folklores, creative arts, dance, food, healing techniques and other facets of the Chamorro culture and traditions.

Tudela said Pacific Islanders are known for their artistry, poetry, and other natural talents. "Yet, we are hardly known or represented in media forms in which cultural traditions could be widely shared among Pacific Islanders, or non-Pacific Islanders."

"Pacific Islanders are literally a minority in their own island," she added.

As a host culture, Tudela said the CNMI should not allow the continued annihilation of the culture of the indigenous population on Saipan. "It is enough that Saipan is already inundated and overrun by outside interest," Tudela said.

With this, she said the council in partnership with the Office of the Mayor is seeking help from the SNILD to realize the completion of the center for the Chamorro culture on Saipan and the "timely implementation" of program features that would showcase the local culture, custom, language, and traditions.

Comments sought on plan to protect bird on Cocos Island

A draft Safe Harbor Agreement that proposes to establish a breeding population of the endangered ko'ko or Guam rail on Cocos Island is available for a 30-day public comment period, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The draft agreement and proposed permit was published in the Federal Register on Jan. 10.

Cocos Island Resort and the Guam Department of Agriculture have applied for an enhancement of survival permit and a proposed Safe Harbor Agreement for the benefits of the ko'ko'. Implementation of the proposed agreement would provide for voluntary habitat restoration, maintenance, and activities to enhance the habitat and recovery of the Guam rail on 83.1 acres of Cocos Island partly owned by Cocos Island Resort, and the Guam Department of Parks and Recreation.

"Thanks to the Cocos Island Resort and its cooperators in local and federal governments, wild ko'ko' may once again be seen on Guam," said Patrick Leonard, field supervisor, Pacific Islands Fish and Wildlife Office. "Voluntary cooperative conservation efforts with the private sector strengthen the efforts of government agencies and help ensure protection of valuable habitat and the recovery of endangered species."

A Safe Harbor Agreement encourages private landowners to conduct voluntary conservation activities and assures them that they will not be subjected to increased endangered species restrictions should their beneficial stewardship efforts result in increased numbers of listed species. As long as enrolled landowners maintain agreed-upon baseline conditions, they may make any other lawful use of the enrolled property during the permit term. The primary objective of this proposed agreement is to establish a breeding population of Guam rails on Cocos Island within 10 years.

The private lands covered by the proposed agreement and permit consist of mixed forest and beach strand habitat. Current land use practices include the operation of a day resort for tourists and overnight camping. The ko'ko' was last observed in the wild on Northern Guam in the mid-1980s; therefore, the baseline for the species is zero. ***(PR)***

Alien workers' group hosts tribute to Sablan

By CLARISSA DAVID
CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Nonresident workers who participated in the Dec. 7, 2007, Unity March paid tribute to newly elected Rep. Christina Marie Sablan by hosting a dinner party for her at Rey Lounge, Aqua Resort Club Saturday night.

These guest workers, who have united to form the Core Group, planned the gathering to congratulate and express their gratitude to Sablan. The tribute coincided with the inaugural Mass for the elected members of the Legislature and Municipal Council that same afternoon.

"I was very surprised. Bonnie [Sagana] told me that we're having barbecue…by the beach. Then I found out on Thursday that we're having dinner at Aqua," said Sablan, who was taken by surprise when the lights were turned on and guests started clapping the moment she entered the room.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Rep. Tina Sablan holds the certificate of appreciation given her by Core Group members and officials during a tribute dinner at the Aqua Resort Club Saturday night.

The Core Group presented Sablan a certificate "to express our deep appreciation for your valuable involvement and support to our cause for the welfare of the community."

"Thank you all very much from the bottom of my heart. I'm very humbled, honored, grateful for all that you've done tonight," Sablan said as she received the certificate.

"I also would like to say that nothing that I've done this past year has been anything that no other citizen, no other ordinary citizen, could not have done. And I certainly haven't done anything alone," added Sablan.

Sablan also said that if there was one thing that she learned from last year, it would be that ordinary people can do extraordinary things if they unite for a common cause and their hearts are in the right place.

"The unity march proved that…people from all over the community can come together for a common purpose to do something that is right for the Commonwealth."

Sablan stressed that the work doesn't end there. "That was just the beginning. It shouldn't end on this night, and it certainly shouldn't end with my inauguration… This is an ongoing movement and I wish we continue to be united for a common cause " she said.

Sablan emphasized that she can't do everything on her own and that she would still need the assistance and help of the people in the community. She encouraged everyone to continue their participation and involvement on issues.

"If there are public hearing or forms or any other opportunities for you to bring your own experiences… please, I ask all of you to participate [in these forums]," Sablan said.

She also reiterated how grateful she is to the guest workers for "contributing to this community and really working together for a better future for all of us."

Some of the members of the Core Group also gave short speeches.

Bonnie Sagana described Sablan as "a young and progressive woman who provides us a signal of hope." Irene Tantiado considers Sablan "an inspiration… a person larger than life who helped… not only Filipinos but also other people to be united."

Sr. Stella Mangona acknowledged how "fortunate we are to have Tina in the Legislature" and urged everyone to continue the quest for peace. H.M. Ferdous, who represented the Bangladeshi community that night, want "to thank the local people for they have chosen the right person to do the right things."

Local members of the community who were also present that evening had good words for the congresswoman. Ed Propst, who regards Sablan as his sister, said that "it's always good to be amongst friends—actually, family." Ron Hodges praised Sablan and told everyone that "she is going to be the leader that everyone will all follow."

Sablan, together with the other newly elected members of the 16th Northern Mariana Islands Commonwealth Legislature, was sworn into office yesterday.

Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
State Board of Education
Public School System
P. O. Box 501370, Saipan, MP 96950

Invitation For Bid
IFB 08-015

The CNMI Public School System and the CNMI State Board of Education are soliciting competitive sealed bids for the purchase, delivery, and installation of **Desktop Computers and Accessories for Tinian Jr./Sr. High School.**

Detailed information on the Scope of Work is available at the PSS Procurement & Supply Office located on the 3rd floor of the NMI Retirement Fund Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, MP 96950.

All bids shall be placed in a sealed envelope face marked "IFB 08-015" containing one (1) original and three (3) copies and shall be submitted to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office no later than February 14, 2008 at 10:00 a.m. Responsibility determination documents shall be placed in a separate envelope marked "IFB 08-015, CONFIDENTIAL - Responsibility determination" (1-original and 1-copy). Any bid after the aforementioned date and time will not be accepted under any circumstance.

Technical questions shall be in writing and addressed to Mr. Carl de la Cruz, Acting Procurement & Supply Officer via fax # (670) 664-3791. Alternatively, technical questions may be e-mailed to the following address: **delacruzc@pss.cnmi.mp**. Questions shall be submitted no later than ten (10) calendar days prior to the submission deadline.

The Public School System reserves the right to award single or multiple awards or to reject any or all bids if to do so is in the best interest of the Public School System.

All bids shall become the property of the Public School System.

General inquiries to this announcement may be directed to the PSS Procurement and Supply Office at telephone numbers 237-3062 / 3035.

/S/ Dr. David M. Borja, D.B.A.
Commissioner of Education

/S/ Carl F. Dela Cruz, M.B.A.
Acting P & S Officer

2 firms, 2 vendors shut down

From September to December 2007, the Bureau of Environmental Health closed down a water firm, a restaurant, and two illegal roadside vendors due to serious violations of health and sanitation standards and rules and regulations.

The latest establishment closed was the Jin Joo Restaurant in Chalan Kanoa, shut down on Dec. 19, 2007. Before that, the Crystal Water Manufacture in Papago was closed on Sept. 19, 2007, followed by two illegal roadside vendors—AAX 939 (on Nov. 1, 2007) and ABY 048 (on Nov. 5, 2007).

The bureau also conducted sanitary inspections in December 2007 at the following retail, eating and drinking establishments and their grades are as follows:

Grade "A"
- Jhem's Restaurant Garapan
- Spn Botanical Garden Restaurant, Papago
- Ocean Palace Shark's Fin, As Denni
- LN Market, Chalan Kanoa
- Bianca Restaurant, San Jose
- Down Market & Butcher, Garapan
- Star Best Café, Garapan
- Shimanokura Japanese Restaurant, Garapan
- LJ's BBQ Stand, Dan Dan
- XO Market, Wholesale & Butcher, Gualo Rai
- DFS Spn Retail, Airport
- DFS Spn Refreshment & Bakery, Garapan
- Subway Restaurant, Garapan
- Mark Fastfood & BBQ, Susupe
- New Times Store, Garapan
- New Manna, San Vicente
- New Amiga Market, Sadog Tasi
- Pac. Spn Wholesale, Gualo Rai
- Esy Kitchen Restaurant & Bar, Garapan
- Joe's Bar & Grill, Garapan
- Diamond Chinese Restaurant, Garapan
- Genpro Wholesale, As Lito
- Kim's Mini Mart, Tofu & Bean Spouts Manufacture, San Jose
- Hafa Deli Bakery, Garapan
- DJ Fish Mobile, Susupe
- Flame Store, San Antonio

Grade "B"
- Kazan Restaurant, Garapan
- J&N Mini Mart II, As Matuis
- Canton Restaurant, Garapan

There may have been changes to these grades since this information was released. For updated information, call the Bureau of Environmental Health at 664-4870 or fax 664-4871.

$1,500
Cash Reward

The NMI Council for the Humanities is offering a $1,500 cash reward for the return of three desktop computers stolen from the Council's office in Dandan on the evening of 6 January 2008.

Individuals in possession of these computers or knowledge of their current whereabouts are asked to contact Council staff at telephone number 235-4785 during regular working hours. All information will be kept confidential.

MLK Day to be 'A Day On, Not A Day Off'

By ANGELO VILLAGOMEZ
angelovillagomez@gmail.com
CORRESPONDENT

Next Monday, Beautify CNMI will lead volunteers from the Marianas in the King Day of Service. They will join volunteers from across the nation conducting food drives, painting schools and community centers, recruiting mentors for needy youth, bringing meals to homebound neighbors, and other volunteer activities. The King Day of Service was created to transform Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s life and teachings into community service that helps solve social problems.

Beautify CNMI is urging members of the community to find some time to give back to the community on Martin Luther King Day. They are looking for volunteers to join them in cleanups or to just go out on their own and find some way to help other people.

"People can just go out on their own and cut the grass around one of the schools," suggested Beautify CNMI founder Cinta M. Kaipat.

This will be the second consecutive year that Beautify CNMI has promoted A Day On, Not a Day Off. Last year volunteers participated in a cleanup of the Garapan Tourist District and the beach between Hafa Adai Hotel and Fiesta Resort.

This year they are looking to expand beyond a single event. Several groups have already pledged to participate and the coalition is looking for more people to participate.

Friends of the Mariana Islands will lead a cleanup of the road between NMC and Middle Road.

PSS Teacher Kimberly Vaillancourt will lead a group of graffiti busters on Tinian. They are going to use leftover paint from the Navy Hill Lighthouse restoration.

Marianas Dive will participate in the King Day of Service by holding a dive cleanup of the Grotto. Experienced divers wanting to help rid the outside wall of the Grotto of fishing line and debris are asked to meet at the Grotto parking lot at 8am. It is highly recommended that volunteers bring along a dive knife as they will be collecting fishing debris that often requires cutting monofilament lines in order to preserve the coral. Mesh bags will be provided.

Fishing near the grotto is illegal, yet fishermen are still fishing off of the cliffs. Bird Island and the Grotto were designated as sanctuaries for the conservation of wildlife and marine life by P.L. 12.-46. A fine of $500 and/or a prison sentence of not more than one year shall be imposed on any individual caught fishing in the area. Division of Fish & Wildlife has not caught anyone yet. Marianas Dive hopes to raise awareness of the continuing illegal fishing with this event.

Other volunteer events are listed online at www.beautifycnmi.com. People interested in more information can contact Beautify CNMI volunteer Angelo Villagomez at angelovillagomez@gmail.com.

Angelo Villagomez is the executive director of MINA.

Galang

Woman missing since Dec. 30

A 40-year-old woman has been missing on Saipan since Dec. 30, 2007, according to the Department of Public Safety yesterday.

DPS spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said family members last saw Rosalia Theresa Mettao Galang walking away from her residence in Chalan Lau Lau on Dec. 30 between 10am and 11am.

Ogumoro said Galang was last seen wearing a blue Levis long pants and a light blue long sleeve shirt with stripes running down on either side of the sleeve.

Ogumoro said Galang's husband, Rommel Quinto Galang, called DPS last Tuesday, Jan. 8, to report that his wife has been missing.

Mrs. Galang, a Carolinian, was described as 5'10" tall, 200 lbs, has brown eyes and black hair.

"DPS is seeking the public assistance for any information or the location of Rosalia Galang. Should you have information, please contact DPS at 664-9001/2 or call the Criminal Investigation Bureau at 664-9042 or 9055 and 287-9103," the spokesperson said. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

White House internship program seeks candidates

By RIANNE PANGELINAN-BROWN
Rianne_pangelinan@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The White House Internship Program is seeking individuals who would like to serve something greater than themselves.

The highly competitive program provides an opportunity for current students and recent graduates to experience everyday life at the White House while working with high-level officials on a variety of tasks and projects.

Strong applicants should exhibit sound academic credentials, a demonstrated interest in public service, solid written and verbal communication skills, a history of community involvement, and a strong character and leadership skills.

Beyond experiencing the day-to-day operations of the White House, interns participate in a speaker series, tours, community service projects and various White House events.

In 2001, Marianas Baptist Academy alumna Dorothy Leung was accepted to train under the National Institute of Health Extramural Research Program under the White House Initiative on Asian Americans and Pacific Islanders.

According to former congressman William S. Torres, participation in the US program would be a powerful means of bringing greater awareness and sensitivity about the CNMI in and around the DC federal community.

The summer 2008 internship's goal is to give opportunity to enthusiastic and capable students to work on a wide variety of projects, entailing many challenges as well as rewarding experiences.

The application deadline for the Summer 2008 White House Internship is Feb. 26, 2008.

Applications should be submitted to intern_application@whitehouse.gov. For more information visit their website at http://www.whitehouse.gov/intern or call White House personnel at 202-456-5979.

ELEVENTH CNMI STATE BOARD OF EDUCATION

PUBLIC NOTICE

Pursuant to CMC § 9910(a), the CNMI State Board of Education hereby gives notice that a Special Meeting of the State Board will be held on Wednesday, January 16, 2008, 9:00 A.M. at the BOE Conference Room, second floor of the Retirement Fund Building, Saipan

AGENDA

I. CALL TO ORDER

II. ROLL CALL

III. ELECTION OF OFFICERS

IV. NEW BUSINESS
A. Appointment of Standing Committee Chairs, Vice Chairs & Committee Assignments.

V. ADJOURNMENT

Note: Pursuant to CMC § 9912, the Board may vote to meet in executive session at any time.

INTERESTED PERSONS ARE WELCOME TO ATTEND AND TO SUBMIT WRITTEN OR ORAL COMMENTS ON THE ABOVE AGENDA ITEMS.

For more information contact the Board Office at Tel. No. 237-3010 or Fax No. 664-3711.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

JANUARY 15, 1999

Managaha bidder seeks to halt new re-bidding

The Marianas Marine Management, Inc., a locally-owned corporation seeking to operate Managaha Island, has prodded the Division of Procurement and Supply to force the Board of Public Lands to decide on the next concessionaire of the popular tourist destination based on proposals previously submitted to BPL. In a protest lodged January 12, MMM, through its legal counsel Jesus C. Borja, asked the procurement and supply division to stop BPL from its plan to seek fresh proposals to develop Managaha, a tiny island west of Saipan. MMM said the next operator of Managaha should be selected based on the RFP issued in August, prior to the enactment of a controversial law giving preference to corporations and individuals of NMI descent to develop the island for commercial purposes.

All systems go for 902 talks

Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio yesterday said the CNMI 902 team is all set to resume negotiations under the Section 702 of the Covenant with White House officials despite irreconcilable positions of the two governments on how talks should proceed. The governor told an interview the seven-man panel, led by Lt. Gov. Jesus R. Sablan, are prepared to meet with Washington negotiators beginning Tuesday for a four-day bilateral talks aimed at resolving differences in implementing local immigration and minimum wage laws.

Amid Tenorio's optimism, the two sides are still at loggerheads over the parameters of discussions that is threatening to put talks on a shaky start after two cancellations last year.

JANUARY 15, 2001

Sweeney: Continue lobby efforts in DC

Saying the Clinton administration has been unfair in providing members of the U.S. Congress of the real situation in the CNMI, Rep. John E. Sweeney (R-NY) emphasized Saturday the need to continue lobbying efforts in Washington so as to thwart attempts of a federal takeover. "I think they (Clinton administration) have turned a blind eye. I suspect that they have done it with other motivations in mind," he said. Sweeney told business leaders during the installation of the new officers of the Saipan Chamber of Commerce that they have an important role to play in informing the people in Washington about CNMI's efforts to become self-sustaining and carry out changes to make life better for the people.

'To save millions cut House seats to 15'

The number of seats at the House of Representatives should be pruned to 15 or even 12 in order to save taxpayers millions of dollars in government expenditures that can be used to fund other critical programs on the islands. This was the suggestion of Senate Vice President Thomas P. Villagomez who broached the idea in light of the forthcoming conference in Dallas, Texas that will tackle re-districting of legislative representation across the country. He said the result of the recent census should encourage CNMI officials to look into the composition of the lower house, particularly on Saipan, to shift the number of representatives.

JANUARY 15, 2002

Hard work begins for BB administration

Gov. Juan N. Babauta and Lt. Gov. Diego Benavente will buckle down to work and start addressing social and economic problems facing the Northern Marianas, as they were officially inducted to office yesterday morning. "Yes, we're ready to work," Babauta told hundreds of guests who attended his administration's inauguration at the American Memorial Park Amphitheater. Babauta said his administration will tap available local and federal resources, as well as explore other funding sources, to spur economic activities in the Northern Marianas.

Downpour fails to dampen rites

Sporadic rain showers greeted the joint inauguration rites of the Commonwealth's three highest-ranking public officials at the American Memorial Park yesterday. But rain or shine, the crowd of zealous attendees were not dissuaded from staying until the end of the installation ceremony. Others viewed the infrequent downpour as a blessing—a premonition of good fortune for the Northern Marianas in the hands of the new administration. The large-sized canopy installed to cover the stretch of the amphitheater bleachers helped deter the rain from falling down on majority of the seated audience.

Island Snapshots

INAUGURAL MASS

Rep. Rosemond Blanco and Sen. Pete Reyes pose with family members and Bishop Tomas A. Camacho during the Inaugural Mass for the 16th Northern Mariana Islands Commonwealth Legislature and the 10th Saipan and Northern Islands Municipal Council held Saturday, Jan. 12, 2008.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Bishop Tomas A. Camacho joins Rep. Ed Salas and family.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Rep. Ray Palacios and family join Bishop Tomas A. Camacho during the Inaugural Mass.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Rep. Joseph P. Deleon Guerrero and family with Bishop Tomas A. Camacho.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

The hardworking Legislative Bureau staff pose with Bishop Tomas A. Camacho.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Maggie Untalan with family and friends.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Rep. Ralph DLG. Torres with his brothers and sister.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Rep. Tina Sablan with family members and close friends.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Rep. Ray N. Yumul and family gather for a photo.

SCENES FROM AN INAUGURATION

Washington Rep. Pete A. Tenorio, Lt. Gov. Timothy Villagomez and wife Margaret give a round of applause for the members of the House of Representatives.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Former House of Representative speakers Oscar M. Babauta, Heinz S. Hofschneider and Diego T. Benavente join the speaker for the 16th Legislature, Rep. Arnold I. Palacios.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Senators Paterno S. Hocog and Jude U. Hofschneider relay the message that they are ready to conduct business to the House of Representatives. Also in photo is Speaker Arnold I. Palacios.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Nikolao Pula, deputy assistant secretary for Insular Affairs, grace the inauguration of the 16th Northern Mariana Islands Commonwealth Legislature on Capital Hill.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Hundreds of family, relatives and friends gather at the House chamber on Capital Hill to witness the inauguration of the 16th Legislature.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Senators Luis P. Crisostomo, Jr., Felix T. Mendiola, Paul A. Manglona, and Jude U. Hofschneider sing the U.S. and CNMI national anthem.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Senators Maria Frica T. Pangelinan, Paterno S. Hocog, Henry H. San Nicolas, and Joseph M. Mendiola sing the U.S. and CNMI national anthem.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Family, relatives and friends of gather at the Senate chamber to witness the inauguration ceremony.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Senate President Pete P. Reyes joins Senators Felix T. Mendiola, Paul A. Manglona, and Jude U. Hofschneider after the inauguration ceremony.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Members of the Senate bow their heads in prayer during the ceremony.

JACQUELINE HERNANDEZ

Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER
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EDITORIAL

A Middle East commitment

On Thursday in Jerusalem, President Bush completed a full circle on the Middle East from his starting point as president. In 2001 he disparaged and quickly abandoned President Bill Clinton's personal attempt to broker a final peace settlement between Israelis and Palestinians during his final months in office. Seven years later, ending his first visit to Israel as president, Mr. Bush set a goal of finishing that peace treaty during his own final months; said he would personally involve himself in pressuring both sides; and, like Mr. Clinton before him, laid out his own parameters for a deal.

The only significant difference between the two sets of presidential ideas was that Mr. Bush was unwilling, unlike Mr. Clinton, to discuss a solution for Jerusalem, where the largest concessions will have to come from Israel. Instead, he mainly sketched the painful sacrifices required from Palestinians, including the surrender of some West Bank territory and the payment of compensation rather than the "return" of Palestinians who fled Israel in 1948. Still, none of what the president said was novel. Mr. Bush's statement merely confirmed that seven years of bloodshed, unilateral actions and diplomatic stasis, during which both Israelis and Palestinians sought to change the terms suggested by Mr. Clinton, have been a tragic waste of lives and time.

The current president might argue that conditions for a peace settlement are more favorable now than when he took office. Israel and the Palestinians were then led by Ariel Sharon and Yasser Arafat, bitter enemies who did not want Mr. Clinton's deal. In contrast, current Israeli Prime Minister Ehud Olmert and Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas say that they respect each other, and in private conversations have come much closer to embracing the necessary compromises. But Mr. Olmert and Mr. Abbas, unlike their predecessors, are unable to bend their own governments or people to their will; they have allowed the nascent peace process to be stalled and undermined by their own negotiators and political allies.

Concerted pushing by Mr. Bush in the next year might persuade the Israeli and Palestinian leaders to complete and sign off on a detailed formula for peace, if not a treaty. That would certainly be worth the president's investment. But implementation is harder to imagine. So far U.S. prodding has failed to induce Mr. Olmert and Mr. Abbas to take initial confidence-building steps they have repeatedly promised, such as the dismantlement of illegal Israeli outposts in the West Bank or a campaign to stop incitement against Israel by Palestinian media and schools. Even if the two leaders manage to gain control over their own bureaucracies and security forces, there remains the problem of the Hamas movement, which controls the Gaza Strip and has both the means and the motive to violently disrupt any steps toward peace.

Mr. Bush seems to believe that Hamas can be contained until a peace deal is completed, at which point Palestinians can be asked to choose between statehood and Gaza's miserable isolation. More likely, Mr. Abbas and Israel will have to choose between an attempt to crush Hamas by military means, led by Israel, or a deal that would buy Hamas's acceptance of the peace process and end attacks on Israel in exchange for a lift of the current siege. Both alternatives are risky; but if Gaza is left to fester, Mr. Bush's push for peace may well fail in the same way as Mr. Clinton's—with an explosion of violence.

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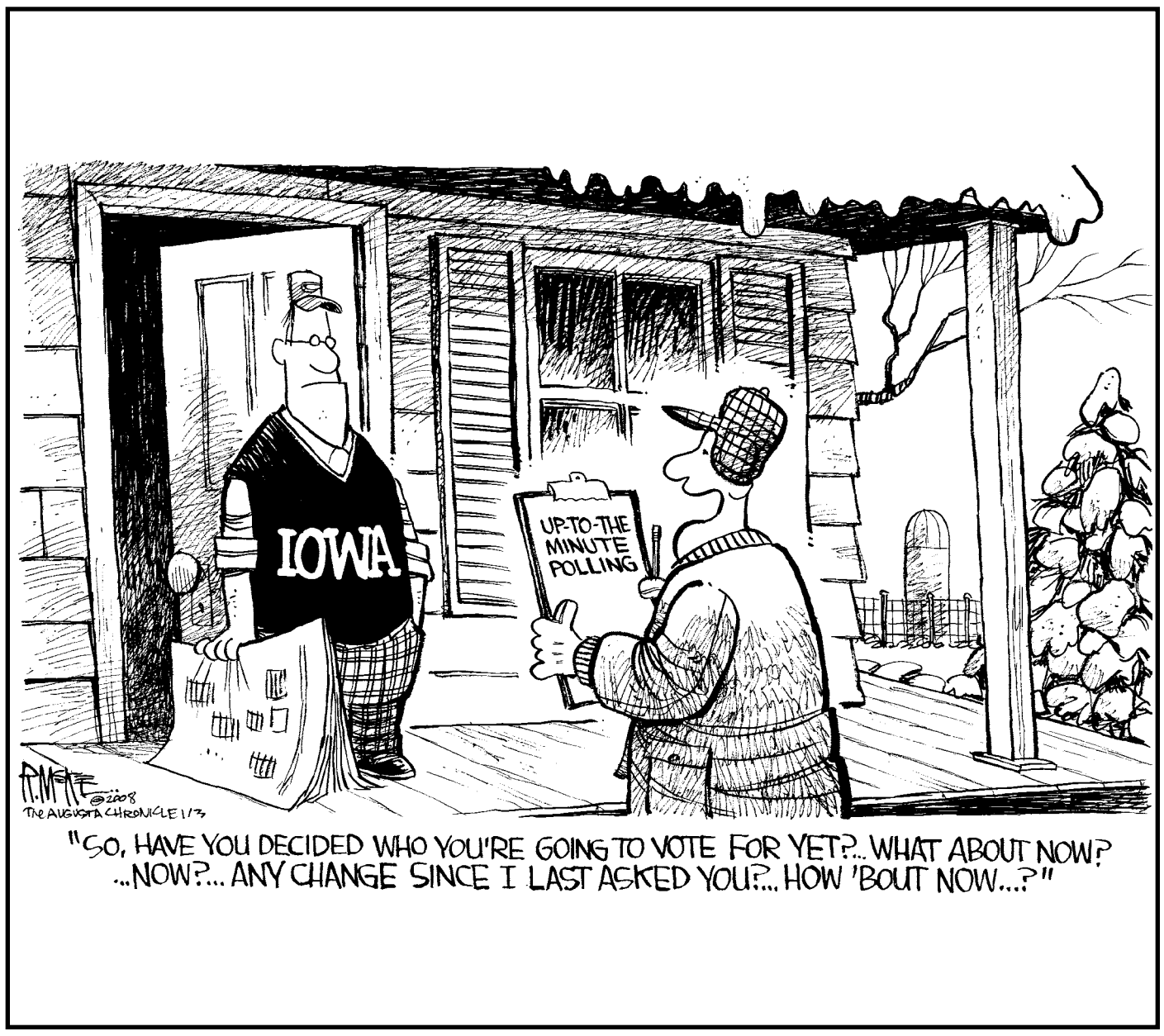
IOWA
UP-TO-THE MINUTE POLLING
P.M.Ste ©2008
THE AUGUSTA CHRONICLE 1/13
"SO, HAVE YOU DECIDED WHO YOU'RE GOING TO VOTE FOR YET?... WHAT ABOUT NOW? ...NOW?... ANY CHANGE SINCE I LAST ASKED YOU?... HOW 'BOUT NOW...?"

Speak out, and listen

Pardon my French

It seems last week's article trying to advertise the Zoning Department's training classes by panning the hilarious Chinese-to-English translations found in some owner's manuals was misconstrued by some folks to be a real translation. Nope. I can't read a word of Mandarin and just made up the piece by playing fast and loose with the English version of the Training Class announcement in an attempt to be entertaining and to get the word out about the class schedule. My apologies for any inconvenience or hurt feelings.

I do hope you had a chance to attend the classes given for free by the Zoning Administrator, Steve Tilley, to clarify the new law and how it will be administered and enforced. If not, you may still drop by their offices on the 2nd Floor of the Joeten Dandan building and get your questions answered. You can also call 234-9663/7 or go online to www.zoning.gov.mp for more information. Email questions can be sent to staff@zoning.gov.mp .

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Hillary is Dead!

No, they didn't let Sirhan Sirhan out of jail. So it's not Hillary-the-one-who-doesn't-want-to-use-her-last-name Clinton who's on the slab. It's Sir Edmund Hillary of Mount Everest fame. The guy who "climbed it because it was there." The guy who made himself and Tenzing Norgay famous by being the first to climb up the biggest hill on the block back in 1953.

In the intervening 50 odd years since his famous climb, Sir Edmund (an informal guy who liked to be called Ed) went back to Nepal over 100 times to raise funds for schools and health clinics for the Sherpas and other residents of the mountainous country. He also led huge expeditions to clean up mountains of garbage, equipment and trash left behind by the many climbing teams that followed in his wake. (Sort of the Angelo Villagomez of the Himalayas).

This man was a hero to thousands, maybe millions of kids and adults the world over, not so much for climbing the mountain, but for persevering in the face of adversity and for getting the job done even though the going was difficult. There was no "quit" in Sir Edmund. He epitomized the "finish the job" credo that makes successful civilizations successful.

Thanks Sir Edmund Hillary for inspiring multitudes to be better than they thought they could be.

■ ■ ■

Speak No Evil

I sat down to write an article about the importance of effective communications as it relates to the newly inaugurated Legislature and their ability to keep track of where their constituents stand on issues and events. To generate effective input, the electorate also needs to communicate with each other and with the legislative bodies regularly. The topics of the day need to be discussed intelligently and rationally. What we find in most non-formal discussions about local, national or international politics is communication hampered by impolite and often uninformed bullying tactics.

I realized I had read an outstanding article by Mr. Michael Cloud about effective communications a few months ago and rather than only paraphrase him or just use his ideas it would be better to reprint the majority of his thoughts on the matter here with only minor editorial input. He states the case with rational clarity:

Gresham's Law of Communication -- and How to Reverse It.

"Bad money drives good money out of circulation," says Gresham's Law of Money, "when there are legal tender laws."

Imagine that you have two coins, each with a face value of $10. One has ten dollars worth of silver or gold in it. Good money. The other is made from cheap metals and has, perhaps, ten cents' worth of metal in it. Bad money. Now imagine that the government legally requires you and everyone else to accept both coins at their face value. Ten dollars. You can spend either coin for ten dollars worth of goods or services. It might seem like no big deal.

But there's a wrinkle. The government starts coining billions of dollars worth of the cheap metal money. Increasing the money supply. Inflating the currency. The purchasing power of money falls. You and everyone else expect the government to print and coin more money every year. And the next. And the next.

Imagine that you receive $20 for work. Two coins. One with gold or silver in it. The other without. Which coin do you spend? And

See SPEAK OUT on next page

SOUR GRAPES

By BRUCE BATEMAN
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Bruce A. Bateman writes Sour Grapes when the moon is full and the mood strikes. Stay tuned for each exciting episode. "Yes, he is opinionated." Email: bbateman@pticom.com; Blog: http://saipanuvian.blogspot.com/

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'Restore the people's confidence in Legislature'

Editor's Note: The following is the text of the speech that the author delivered during the inauguration of the 16th Legislature yesterday, Jan. 14, 2008, at the House of Representatives' chamber on Capital Hill.

By ARNOLD I. PALACIOS
Special to the Saipan Tribune

Arnold I. Palacios is the House Speaker of the 16th House of Representatives.

I rise today, both humbled and honored by this opportunity to serve as the Speaker of the House of Representatives, 16th Northern Marianas Commonwealth Legislature. It is a privilege that comes with the noble responsibility of service, dedication, and commitment. My fellow colleagues, we face a crisis of confidence in government. People will tell you that they have lost faith. They see Capitol Hill as a place where well-connected friends are enriched, politicians make promises they do not keep, and decisions are made regardless of the consequences on the daily struggles and plight of families and business.

Our people are deserving of so much more from its leaders.

I call on all of you to restore the people's confidence. We do this by making government a staunch defender of fairness and opportunity for all. We do this by making government come through on its promises for a better and prosperous Commonwealth. We do this by making government a reflection of what is good and what is right about the Commonwealth. We do this by making a government an institution that everyone can be proud to call their own.

Let us be inspired by the wisdom of Senator Margaret Chase Smith's words as she describes what public service means to her:

"Public service must be more than doing a job efficiently and honestly. It must be a complete dedication to the people and to the nation with full recognition that every human being is entitled to courtesy and consideration, that constructive criticism is not only to be expected but sought, that smears are not only to be expected but fought, that honor is to be earned, not bought."

By grand design, our Constitution calls for the election of the House of Representatives every two years. The founders of this Commonwealth intended that the House have the quickest turnover rate of new leaders. Those of us who are returning members can vouch for that.

When we say that the basic duty of this House is to serve as the voice of the people, that's not mere rhetoric. It is the Constitutional truth. Here in the House, our basic responsibility is to listen to the concerns of the people, to debate the issues, and at the end, to resolve the problems that we face.

Of the issues facing us, rising CUC power rates is the one concern that people have expressed to me with a sense of urgency. And rightly so. Families have seen their disposable income wiped away by the cost of their monthly CUC billings. Many struggle to keep their lights on, while at the same time, provide enough food on the table for their families. Take a drive at night through several homestead communities and you will see that half of the households are without power.

It is imperative that we focus our attention on this pressing issue. We cannot expect families and businesses to continue to pay high power bills with what little is left in their stretched budgets to pay for this necessity. Already these high power rates have become unaffordable to many.

But we must first acknowledge that the energy crisis is global. We are not the only community reeling from the impact of high fuel prices. We should support conservation measures and "going green" to lessen our dependence on imported oil. As a government, we must explore all options, short term and long term, even consider subsidy, if necessary. We must explore alternative energy sources, with the objective of assessing a sustainable power rate on consumers.

The time for action, the right action, is now. We need to plan to succeed. Not a "shoot from the hip" strategy destined to fail but one which strives for sustainable growth.

Let us get back on track with our capital improvement projects and infrastructure building. We cannot let millions of dollars of CIP money sit idle somewhere in New York for nearly a decade, while our power plants need maintenance work, our waste water systems are overloaded, and water systems are in deplorable condition. This reflects poor or no planning on the part of our leadership.

We need a new policy mindset that does away with the old notion of parochial island politics. It results in wasteful spending on ill-conceived projects. In the end, we all end up paying for it dearly.

Let us also advance initiatives to put our economy on the way to recovery. In a fiercely competitive destination market, our tourism industry and promotional efforts must be enhanced by the unique and distinctive culture of the Northern Marianas. We must also develop and follow through with concrete plans to seize opportunities and to take advantage of the military buildup on Guam. This would require additional promotional funding for the Marianas Visitors Authority. MVA must be put to task, and be held accountable, to develop plans to showcase the unique culture of our islands in our visitor facilities that set us apart from the rest of the world.

Let us continue to attract new foreign investment to the islands. If necessary, we must give consideration to reviewing the land alienation provisions of the constitution. This will require balancing on one hand the need to attract NEW foreign investment and on the other the displacement and dispossession of Northern Marianas descent people from their ancestral lands. Frank, open and thorough discussions with the community is a must. We should not rush to decide this important issue. No 11th hour arm twisting, and no economic blackmail. Any decision that we make in the 16th Legislature must be well-informed of all possible aspects and consequences of our decision.

Finally, we must not forget our constitutional commitment to our children's education. When we do not provide the basic school supplies, when we do not provide adequate facilities, when we do not place schools as a budget priority, we endanger our own livelihood, our future, and our ability to inspire our young children to work harder and to strive to better citizens. I challenge you colleagues, not to short change the education of our children. We must provide the necessary funds for our public school system and for post-secondary education.

Resolving these problems requires commitment, serious commitment. And not just from the legislature, but the Administration across the way and the entire Commonwealth. We are a community, small by many standards. We understand that to get things done right, we will need to build consensus. This will require not just talking but also LISTENING. Building consensus will also call for mutual respect among the leadership of this Commonwealth for our divergent points of view. We can accomplish so much more when we listen to, and respect, each other.

Regardless of where we may stand on certain issues, I pledge to you today that I will be an advocate of cooperation. I will work hand in hand with my fellow colleagues to serve the best interests of our people.

The Commonwealth was founded on the hopes for a better future in political union with the United States. Eloquently expressed in the preamble, it is our Constitution that is the embodiment of our traditions and hopes in political union with the United States. Disagree as we may with the United States Congress and the federal administration on immigration, minimum wage and other issues, we must remember that our political relationship with the United States of America is the bedrock of our government.

Let us forge a new and improved relationship with the federal government, open the channels of communication. We do this for ourselves and for the brave young men and women who are members of US armed forces. They have pledged their lives to protect freedom and democracy throughout the world. Let us not fail them and ourselves by not believing in the United States of America, the principles upon which that great nation was founded and the beacon of hope and justice that it represents in today's very troubled world.

The 16th Legislature can be the start of a new and great Commonwealth. As leaders we must be open to the thought of thinking outside the box, and trying new things. I say this because in the coming two years, business of the legislature cannot be as usual if we are to make a difference. We must forge a way of new policy-making, a new way of prioritizing the needs of the Commonwealth together, as a whole.

Saipan, Rota, Tinian, the Northern Islands, we are all together in this venture called the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands. We must all work together. When bad times come, we must share in the suffering together. And in good times, we must all reap the benefits of our work together.

These past two years, we have all felt the pain of our shrinking economy. We continue to watch the exodus of people and businesses leaving our shores to neighboring islands and other countries in search of a better and more prosperous life. Let us work together to improve both the living conditions and business climate of our communities. We need to keep our people here. We can only do so by giving them meaningful opportunities to earn a decent living. I will be seeking your participation and cooperation in the coming months as we begin our efforts to build a better Commonwealth.

As I look around this chamber, I am most impressed by this fact: each and every member brings to this august body unique skills and talents, representing and reflecting the diversity and strength of our community. Martin Luther King, Jr. said it best: "Everybody can be great... because anybody can serve. You don't have to have a college degree to serve. You don't have to make your subject and verb agree to serve. You only need a heart full of grace. A soul generated by love and commitment." With hearts full of grace and souls generated by love and commitment, let us show the people that their Representatives are ready to serve.

Thank you, Si yu'us maase, Oloomway.

God bless us all.

God bless our founders.

God bless the Commonwealth.

SPEAK OUT

From Page 10

which do you keep? Right! You spend the bad money. And save the good money. And so does every other sensible person.

That's Gresham's Law. Gresham's Law only operates when there are legal tender laws. When government decrees that "this note is legal tender for all debts, public and private" and legally requires people to accept it.

The corollary, Gresham's Law of Communication, says, "Bad communication drives out good when both are equally acceptable." Rude, insulting, profane, and inflammatory discussions drive out those which are courteous and respectful. Shouting and name-calling discussions drive out those that are conversational and reasonable. Talking-without-listening discussions drive out those that are open-minded and thoughtful.

We can see it on political talk shows. Hear it on talk radio. Read it on the Internet. We especially see it in blogging and chatting. We see it around tables where people gather to discuss political ideas. We spend our vices, and hoard our virtues. Because bad communication drives out good.

But there's a way to reverse Gresham's Law of Communication. There is NO "legal tender law" of communication. You do NOT have to accept bad communication. You do NOT have to accept profanity, rudeness, shouting, inflammatory language, insults or any other kind of communications you find offensive. Conversations and discussions are based on mutual consent. You can negotiate the terms and conditions of your communications. How? Tell people what you want—and ask if they will do it.

** "John, I really want to talk with you about this, but when you raise your voice, when you call me names, I feel insulted and talked down to. Are you willing to lower your voice and stop name-calling—so I can carefully consider your arguments and evidence?"*

** "Janet, I know you're passionate about global warming, and I respect that. But when you call people who disagree 'deniers,' you are putting them in the same category as Holocaust deniers. Your language is designed to stigmatize and silence them. Are you willing to stop using the word 'denier,' and show us your evidence? Will you do that?"*

** "Tom, I know you feel very strongly about the Iraq War. I want to hear you out. But when you condemn the character and motives of those who disagree with you, when you loudly insult and revile them, I find it almost impossible to listen to your actual arguments and evidence. I need you to stop insulting people who disagree with you. And I need you to calmly lay out your thinking. Will you do that for me?"*

You can explain what kind of language and behavior is and is not acceptable to you. Ask the other person what kind of language and behavior is and is not acceptable to her. You can negotiate. Work it out together.

What if they refuse to converse in a way that's acceptable to you? What if they continue to engage in offensive language and behavior? Tell them what is unacceptable. Tell them why. Walk away.

Requesting, negotiation, and walking away are three powerful tools for creating good communications, for building courteous and civil conversations. You can use them with your family, friends, and co-workers, and with casual acquaintances and strangers. And you will begin to make a difference. As will others who do likewise. From such small beginnings, we can set in motion a social trend of courtesy and cooperation. You and I and others can reverse Gresham's Law of Communication.

■ ■ ■

Quote of the week: Be not deceived: evil communications corrupt good manners.

—Bible, 1 Corinthians xv, 33

The most important thing in communication is to hear what isn't being said.

—Peter Drucker (1909 – 2005)

Sattelite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph with gusts to 30 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 20 mph with gusts to 30 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲82° ▼75°	▲81° ▼74°	▲80° ▼75°	▲80° ▼75°	▲82° ▼74°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Sunny	▲84	▼76
Palau	Thunderstorms	▲87	▼77
Yap	Cloudy	▲87	▼77
Chuuk	Thunderstorms	▲89	▼80
Pohnpei	Thunderstorms	▲86	▼76
Kosrae	Thunderstorms	▲85	▼76
Majuro	Thunderstorms	▲83	▼75

Around The Globe

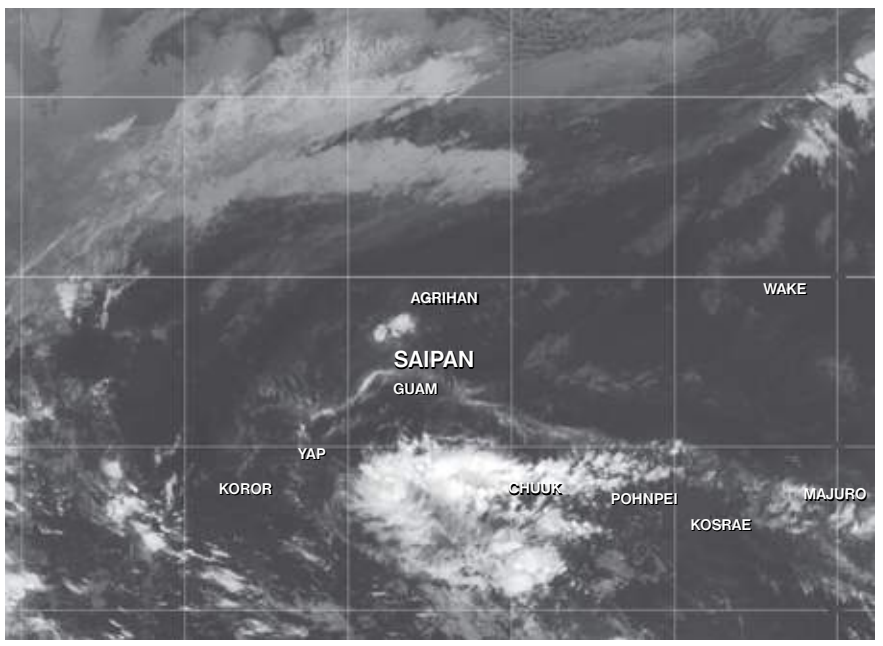
Auckland	Mostly Sunny	▲76	▼66
Beijing	Partly Sunny	▲32	▼12
Hong Kong	Partly Sunny	▲73	▼64
Honolulu	Partly Sunny	▲75	▼65
London	Rain	▲53	▼42
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲72	▼48
Manila	Mostly Cloudy	▲84	▼73
Melbourne	Sunny	▲90	▼69
Miami	Partly Sunny	▲71	▼53
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲36	▼27
Osaka	Partly Sunny	▲45	▼33
Paris	Rain	▲42	▼42
Pusan	Partly Sunny	▲44	▼29
Rome	Mostly Cloudy	▲52	▼42
Salem	Mostly Sunny	▲40	▼26
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲58	▼46
Seoul	Partly Sunny	▲30	▼14
Tokyo	Partly Sunny	▲45	▼31
Washington, DC	Cloudy	▲42	▼28

Tides

Saipan Harbor

05:57AM Today	Low Tide:	0.5 Feet
12:27PM Today	High Tide:	2.0 Feet
07:29PM Today	Low Tide:	0.4 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, MONDAY, JAN. 14, 2008
Western North Pacific between Equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A near-equatorial trough runs from 2N130E to 3N152E to EQ157E. A disturbance on the trough is producing scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms in the area bounded by 1N150E to 6N141E to 9N141E to 10N144E to 8N156E to 3N154E back to 1N150E including Chuuk. Trade-wind convergence is generating scattered showers within 100 miles of a line from 9N157E to 9N160E to 5N172E to 7N180. This includes Majuro but is just north of Pohnpei and Kosrae and just south of Kwajalein. A cold front extends from 25N155E to 24N149E then continues as a shear line to 19N130E and beyond. Areas of low cloudiness and scattered light showers are found near and up to 300 miles northwest of this boundary.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:47AM	6:06PM
Wednesday	6:47AM	6:06PM
Thursday	6:47AM	6:07PM
Friday	6:47AM	6:07PM
Saturday	6:47AM	6:08PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	11:19AM	
Wednesday	12:02PM	12:06AM
Thursday	12:48PM	01:05 AM
Friday	01:40PM	02:07 AM
Saturday	02:39PM	03:12 AM

FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 11, 2008

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Guam

CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	1,2,4,5,6,7
CO9597	8:30am	9:20am	1,2,5,6
CO9313	8:30am	10:00am	3,4,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	Daily
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	2,3,4,5,6,7

Saipan-Seoul

OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 606	3:30pm	7:00pm	2,4,6,7

Saipan-Busan

OZ 608	4:00am	7:35am	1,4,5,7

Guam-Manila

CO 891	6:00am	10:30am	3 via Yap and Koror
CO 893	6:30am	8:05am	6
CO 893	8:25am	10:00am	2
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:45am	1,2,4,6,7

Saipan-Manila

CO 895	4:45pm	6:35pm	6
CO 895	6:45pm	8:35pm	3

Saipan-Nagoya

NW 078	8:30am	11:10am	Daily

Guam-Nagoya

CO 971	7:45am	10:30am	1,2,4,5,6,7
NW 023	4:15pm	7:05pm	Daily
CO 904	4:35pm	7:25pm	Daily

Saipan-Narita

NW 078	8:30am	1:30pm	Daily via Nagoya
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily

Guam-Narita

JO 982	4:15am	7:00am	Daily
CO 961	7:20am	9:55am	Daily
CO 006	1:00pm	3:45pm	Daily
JO 942	3:30pm	6:15pm	Daily
NW 081	3:55pm	6:50pm	Daily
NW 073	4:15pm	7:00pm	Daily
CO 963	4:50pm	7:30pm	Daily

Saipan-Osaka

NW 083	4:30pm	7:25pm	Daily

Guam-Hongkong

CO 910	7:45pm	10:40pm	1,5

Saipan-Guanzhou

CZ 3008	5:00am	8:00am	2,6

Saipan-Rota

CO 9313	8:30am	9:05am	3,4,7

Rota-Guam

CO 9313	9:30am	10:00am	3,4,7

Saipan-Shanghai

MU 590	4:20am	7:00am	2,6

ARRIVALS

Guam-Saipan

CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,4,5,6,7
CO 9316	3:30am	4:20am	2
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9598	10:15am	11:45am	1,2,6 via Rota
CO9600	10:45am	11:35am	3,4,5,7
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	2,3,4,5,6,7

Seoul-Saipan

OZ 605	9:00am	2:30pm	2,4,6,7
OZ 603	7:40pm	10:00am+1	7
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
OZ 607	6:50pm	2:50am+1	3,7 via Busan
OZ 607	7:30pm	2:50am+1	4 via Busan

Busan-Saipan

OZ 607	9:30pm	2:50am+1	3,4,6,7

Manila-Guam

CO 894	11:20am	4:55pm	2
CO 894	7:45pm	1:20am+1	6
CO 892	9:45pm	5:25am+1	3 via Koror
CO 892	9:45pm	6:30am+1	3 via Koror and Yap
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:15pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7

Manila-Saipan

CO 890	9:15am	2:55pm	6
CO 890	11:45am	5:35pm	3

Nagoya-Saipan

NW 077	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily

Nagoya-Guam

NW 024	10:00am	2:40pm	Daily
CO 970	11:30am	4:00pm	Daily
CO 905	8:25pm	12:50am+1	1,3,4,5,6,7

Narita-Saipan

NW 076	10:35am	3:05pm	Daily
NW 077	6:15pm	1:10am+1	Daily via Nagoya

Narita-Guam

JO 941	9:30am	2:05pm	Daily
NW 074	9:45am	2:25pm	Daily
CO 962	11:05am	3:35pm	Daily
CO 007	5:15pm	9:50pm	Daily
NW 082	8:30pm	1:15am+1	Daily
CO 964	8:40pm	1:15am+1	Daily
JO 981	9:30pm	2:05am+1	Daily

Osaka-Saipan

NW 084	10:40am	3:10pm	Daily

Hongkong-Guam

CO 910	11:40pm	6:20am+1	1,5

Guanzhou-Saipan

CZ 3007	8:00pm	4:00am+1	1,5

Rota-Saipan

CO 9598	11:10am	11:45am	1,2,6

Guam-Rota

CO 9598	10:15am	10:45am	1,2,6

Shanghai-Saipan

MU 589	8:05am	3:00am+1	1,5

(Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; PR: Philippine Airlines; CZ: China Southern; CA: Air China; NW: Northwest; JO: Japan Airlines; OZ: Asiana. ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS
  Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS
  A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS
  Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMU'T SARI
  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE
  Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS
  Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.
- CAMPUS BULLETIN
  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and a phone number.
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Business

Webber is *Guam Business'* Executive of the Year

GUAM— Lee P. Webber, president and publisher of *The Honolulu Advertiser*, is the 2007 Executive of the Year. Webber was announced winner at the 25th Annual *Guam Business* Executive of the Year gala, which took place on Saturday, Jan. 12, 2008 at the Hilton Guam Resort & Spa. The announcement—held secret by *Guam Business* each year—was greeted with uproar from a crowd of about 300.

Webber

This year's theme— "Executive Idol" after the reality TV show, "American Idol," was hosted by Ray Gibson, morning talk show host at K57. This is the 25th anniversary of *Guam Business* and the Executive of the Year program, which has since benefited the Guam chapter of the American Red Cross. A resolution was presented to the staff and supporters of Guam Business by members of the 29th Guam Legislature, namely, vice speaker Edward J.B. Calvo, Tina Rose Muna Barnes, and Benjamin "BJ" Cruz.

Prior to taking on his current position, Webber was the president and publisher of the *Pacific Daily News*.

Webber began his career in the U.S. Navy as a Hospital Corpsman from 1966 through 1970 at various posts including U.S. Naval Hospital Vietnam; Camp Lejune, N.C.; and U.S. Naval Hospital in Philadelphia, Pa.

After serving in the Navy, Webber joined Guam Publications Inc. in 1970. He was promoted to various positions including circulation manager, director of community relations, marketing director and eventually to president and publisher of Guam Publications Inc. and president of Pacific Media Inc. in 1983.

In addition, he was also the director of operations of USA Today International Asia/Pacific Region from 1979 to 1983 and general executive for the company from 1989 to 1993.

He is a member of the board of directors for the Chamber of Commerce of Hawaii and a member of its military advisory committee; a member of the board of directors for Diamond Head Theater; a member of the board of directors and executive committee member of Enterprise Honolulu; a member of the board of directors of Hawaii Business Roundtable, the USS Missouri Memorial Association, and the Japan-America Society of Hawaii; and a member of the Foundation for the Asia-Pacific Center for Security Studies.

While on Guam, Webber participated in countless community and civic organizations including the Civil Defense Advisory Council; the Guam Chamber of Commerce; the Guam United Service Organizations Advisory Council; the Guam Visitors Bureau; the Make-A-Wish Foundation; the Marine Awareness Foundation; the Micronesian Divers Association; the Navy League of the United States; the American Red Cross; the Guam Special Olympics committee; and Junior Achievement of Guam.

He is known for his accomplishments with the Guam Chamber of Commerce Armed Forces Committee among other community service endeavors, and maintains a house on Guam. He still considers the island his place of residence.

He holds a 1980 bachelor's in management from the University of Guam.

He and his wife, June, have three children: Lee Webber II (29), Marilyn Webber (15) and Robbie Webber (deceased).

The Executive of the Year gala is a major fundraiser for the Guam chapter of the American Red Cross. The January/February 2008 issue of *Guam Business*, with Webber on the cover, was unveiled that evening.

The 2007 Executive of the Year joins 25 other leading members of the business community in Micronesia. They are Robert H. Jones, president and chief executive officer of Triple J Enterprises Inc., 1983; John M. Borlas, president of IT&E Overseas Inc., 1984; Philip J. Flores, president and chairman of BankPacific, 1985; Doris Flores Brooks, public auditor of Guam, 1986; Mark V. Pangilinan, president of MVP Enterprises Inc., 1987; Allen A. Pickens, coordinator and training coordinator for Tax-Aide, 1988; T. Roy Sullivan (deceased), executive vice president of Jones & Guerrero, 1989; Kurt S. Moylan, president of Moylan's Insurance Underwriters, 1990; Akira "Mike" Baba, president of Baba Corp., 1991; Paul M. Calvo, president and chairman of Calvo Enterprises Inc., 1992; Antoinette D. Sanford, president of the Sanford Technology Group, 1993; Kenneth T. Jones Jr., president of Jones & Guerrero, 1994; Edward M. Calvo (deceased), first vice president of Calvo Enterprises Inc., 1995; L. Carl Peterson, owner and president of Money Resources Inc., 1996; William R. Thompson, 1997; John K. Lee, former senior vice president and region manager of First Hawaiian Bank, 1998; Henry L. Schnabel (deceased), vice president and consultant to Calvo's Insurance Underwriters Inc., 1999; Marian Aldan-Pierce, president of DFS Saipan, 2000; Manfred H. Pieper, general manager of Hilton Guam Resort & Spa., 2001; Thomas G. Ahillen, general manager of Matson Navigation Co., 2002; Juan T. Guerrero, president of Herman's Modern Bakery Inc. and president of Juan T. Guerrero & Associates Inc., 2003; Joseph "Jerry" Kramer, chief executive officer of Pacific International Inc. and Joseph "Joey" Crisostomo, president and owner of Cars Plus and Cycles Plus, 2004; David M. Sablan, president of the Century Group of Companies, 2005, and Alfred C. Ysrael, founder of Tanota Partners, 2006. ***(PR)***

EMPLOYMENT EXPO AP

Speakers from Japanese companies talk to college students seeking jobs about their companies during the annual Employment EXPO in Tokyo Saturday, Jan. 12, 2008. More than 30,000 people took part in the two-day employment seminar co-sponsored by some 800 companies.

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Gulf Air orders 16 Boeing 787s for $4B

DUBAI, United Arab Emirates (AP) -- Bahrain-based airline Gulf Air has ordered 16 of Boeing Co.'s new 787 Dreamliners valued at around $4 billion dollars, with an option for eight more, an airline official said Sunday. "The deal is worth $4 billion at list prices but would rise to $6 billion if we include the options," said Adnan Malek, a spokesman for Gulf Air. The struggling carrier said in November at the Dubai air show that it was planning to renew its entire fleet and looking to order up to 35 planes. "The total order could be more than 35," Malek said. "We are also in talks with Airbus for the A320 narrow-body planes." Gulf Air plans to finance the aircraft purchases through a range of means.

Wall Street eyes earnings data this week

NEW YORK (AP)—This week's flood of readings on inflation, retail sales and earnings is just what a data-hungry Wall Street has been anxious for. Evidence that consumers and companies are cash-strapped could mean the economy is on a fast track toward recession - or already in the midst of one. Stocks floundered last week, bouncing higher and lower as investors grasped for direction ahead of the upcoming earnings deluge. Last week brought a pledge from Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke that he was prepared to lower interest rates if needed, and news that Bank of America Corp. was buying the embattled mortgage lender Countrywide Financial Corp. But the two pieces of encouraging news gave stocks only a temporary lift, as upcoming economic data and earnings releases hung over investors' heads.

GM, UAW negotiating more buyouts

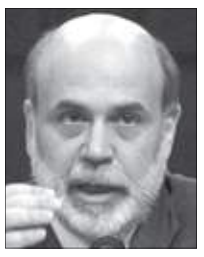
DETROIT (AP)—General Motors Corp. is close to an agreement with the United Auto Workers on another round of buyout and early retirement offers to cut the number of workers in jobs banks and clear openings for workers hired at lower-tier wages, a top company official said Sunday. Troy Clarke, GM's North American president, told reporters at the North American International Auto Show that an announcement could come within a week. "We are negotiating in some cases plant-by-plant, but certainly group-by-group or issue-by-issue, how to roll out a special attrition program," Clark said. "We think that we'll have that done very soon." Clarke said he couldn't reveal specifics of the plan because negotiations continue.

VW reports record global sales for 2007

DETROIT (AP)—Volkswagen AG reported record global sales for 2007, with its eight brands selling nearly 6.2 million vehicles. The increase, announced Sunday at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, was led by strong sales in South America and Asia and offset declines in Germany and North America. Sales for the Volkswagen, Audi, Skoda, Seat, Bentley, Lamborghini, Bugatti and VW commercial brands rose 7.9 percent over 2006 figures, the company said. But sales in Germany were down 4.8 percent, and they dropped 0.5 percent in North America.

Odds are growing for economic recession

WASHINGTON (AP)—The unemployment rate leaps to a two-year high, record numbers of people are forced from their homes and Wall Street nose-dives again. Such is the fallout from a housing meltdown that threatens to slingshot the country into a recession.


Bernanke

The big economic question these days is whether the weakening economy will survive the strains or collapse under them.

The odds have grown that the economy will slip into a recession. At the beginning of last year, many economists put that chance at less than 1-in-3; now an increasing number says it has climbed to around 50-50. Goldman Sachs, the biggest investment bank on Wall Street even thinks a recession is inevitable this year.

Hopeful it can be avoided, President Bush and the Democrat-controlled Congress are exploring economic rescue measures, including possible tax rebates. Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke pledged to lower interest rates as needed.

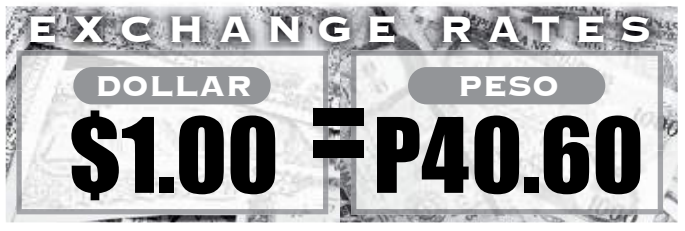
Some grocery coupons go digital

CINCINNATI (AP)—Some coupon users are clicking instead of clipping these days to get their grocery discounts.

Supermarket chains are trying out paperless, or digital, coupons, to help the thrifty-minded save time while saving money. Shoppers load the online discounts onto their store loyalty cards, receiving the credit at the checkout.

Grocers see the innovation as a way to build customer loyalty, drawing consumers who are increasingly spending time online to their Web sites and ultimately, their stores. The move could increase coupon use by attracting shoppers who don't bother with paper coupons. It offers convenience for the companies in reducing handling, tallying and shipping of coupons, as well as cutting paper use.

Kroger Co., the nation's largest traditional grocery chain, and Procter & Gamble Co., the largest consumer products company, are partners in a digital coupon trial that began last month.



Nation

Report: 121 veterans linked to killings

NEW YORK (AP)—At least 121 Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans have committed a killing or been charged in one in the United States after returning from combat, The New York Times reported Sunday.

The newspaper said it also logged 349 homicides involving all active-duty military personnel and new veterans in the six years since military action began in Afghanistan, and later Iraq. That represents an 89-percent increase over the previous six-year period, the newspaper said.

About three-quarters of those homicides involved Iraq and Afghanistan war veterans, the newspaper said. The report did not illuminate the exact relationship between those cases and the 121 killings also mentioned in the report.

The newspaper said its research involved searching local news reports, examining police, court and military records and interviewing defendants, their lawyers and families, victims' families and military and law enforcement officials.

Defense Department representatives did not immediately respond to a telephone message early Sunday. The Times said the military agency declined to comment, saying it could not reproduce the paper's research.

A military spokesman, Lt. Col. Les Melnyk, questioned the report's premise and research methods, the newspaper said. He said it aggregated crimes ranging from involuntary manslaughter to murder, and he suggested the apparent increase in homicides involving military personnel and veterans in the wartime period might reflect only "an increase in awareness of military service by reporters since 9/11."

Neither the Pentagon nor the federal Justice Department track such killings, generally prosecuted in state civilian courts, according to the Times.

The 121 killings ranged from shootings and stabbings to bathtub drownings and fatal car crashes resulting from drunken driving, the newspaper said. All but one of those implicated was male.

Suspect in slain Marine case seen in La.

JACKSONVILLE, N.C. (AP)—The nationwide manhunt for a Marine wanted in the brutal slaying of a 20-year-old pregnant colleague who had accused him of rape focused Sunday on Louisiana and Texas, after he was apparently seen at a bus station.

Witnesses said they saw Marine Cpl. Cesar Armando Laurean was seen at a Shreveport, La., station Saturday night, Onslow County Sheriff Ed Brown said. The bus Laurean was riding was headed to Texas, but police don't know if he continued on that route, he said.

Brown cautioned late Sunday that his detectives were still working to confirm the sightings, backing away from earlier assurances that the witness accounts were genuine. But he was confident Laurean would soon be in custody.

"It will be a short trip—a short vacation—for Mr. Laurean," Brown said. "His vacation may be short, his travel may be long, but I hope we'll be there to help him return."

On Saturday, authorities said they recovered what they believe to be the burned remains of Marine Lance Cpl. Maria Lauterbach and her unborn child from a fire pit in Laurean's backyard, where they suspect he burned and buried her body.

Those remains have been sent to the state medical examiner's office in Chapel Hill for a formal identification.

That same day, state authorities issued an arrest warrant on murder charges for Laurean, 21, of the Las Vegas area. They believe he fled Jacksonville before dawn Friday after leaving behind a note in which he admitted burying her body but claimed Lauterbach cut her own throat in a suicide.

Brown has challenged Laurean's assertion that Lauterbach killed herself, citing what he described as evidence of a violent confrontation inside Laurean's home—blood spatters on the ceiling and a massive amount of blood on the wall.

Brown said Sunday that evidence in the case "leads us to believe that he would be a dangerous and violent person if put in a corner."

"What I've seen and what we've discovered indicates he does have a real heinous behavior about him," he said.

Brown has said Lauterbach purchased a bus ticket to El Paso, Texas, around the time of her disappearance, but said Sunday authorities are not in possession of the ticket. Shreveport is roughly 950 miles southwest of Jacksonville, and is about two dozen miles from the Texas state line and more than 800 miles east of El Paso.

2nd body found in Ala. search for 4 kids

MOBILE, Ala. (AP)—The body of a 3-year-old boy was recovered Sunday in the search for four children allegedly thrown from a coastal bridge by their father, authorities said.

The body was found near shore, a day after a duck hunter found the body of the boy's infant brother about five miles west of the bridge in a marshy area, Mobile County Sheriff Sam Cochran said.

The 3-year-old's body was spotted near shore in Bayou La Fourche Bay, about three miles west of where the infant was found, authorities said.

Cochran said the remaining two bodies could be in the same area or shifted by current closer to the Alabama-Mississippi line. The search will resume Monday and is expected to concentrate on the marshes along the shore.

"Everyone should be on the lookout," Cochran said.

The search for the children—ranging in age from a few months to 3 years—began Tuesday near the mouth of Mobile Bay after prosecutors said the father, Lam Luong, confessed.

The children's mother, 23-year-old Kieu Phan, had gone with Luong to report them missing Monday evening.

After the infant's body was found Saturday, authorities expanded the search zone westward toward Pascagoula, Miss., believing that the strong currents may have moved the remaining bodies in that direction.

As helicopters and airplanes searched, airboats shuttled volunteers into the shallow mud-boggy shoreline, with some walking hand-in-hand in a slow stroll, upending logs and probing debris dumped by the high tide.

Luong, 37, a shrimp boat worker who lives in Irvington, was being held without bond on four counts of capital murder. If convicted, he could be sentenced to death or life in prison without parole.

District Attorney John Tyson Jr. said Luong had confessed to throwing Ryan Phan, 3, Hannah Luong, 2, Lindsey Luong, 1, and Danny Luong, 4 months, off the three-mile-long bridge after an argument with his wife.

Clinton, Obama clash over race issue

AP

Democratic presidential hopeful, Sen. Hillary Rodham Clinton, D-N.Y., points for a question during a town meeting campaign event in Columbia, S.C., Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008.

NEW YORK (AP)—Democrat Hillary Rodham Clinton suggested Sunday that Barack Obama's campaign had injected racial tension into the presidential contest, saying he had distorted for political gain her comments about Martin Luther King's role in the civil rights movement.

"This is an unfortunate story line the Obama campaign has pushed very successfully," the former first lady said in a spirited appearance on NBC's "Meet the Press." "I don't think this campaign is about gender, and I sure hope it's not about race."

Clinton taped the show before appearances in South Carolina, whose Jan. 26 primary will be the first to include a significant representation of black voters. Blacks were 50 percent of primary voters in the state in 2004 and the number is expected to swell this time.

Both New York Sen. Clinton and her husband, the former president, have engaged in damage control this week after black leaders criticized their comments shortly before the New Hampshire primary last Tuesday.

The senator was quoted as saying King's dream of racial equality was realized only when President Lyndon B. Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act of 1964, while Bill Clinton said Illinois Sen. Obama was telling a "fairy tale" about his opposition to the Iraq war.

Former President Clinton has since appeared on several black radio programs to say he was referring to Obama's record on the Iraq war, not on his effort to become the nation's first black president.

At an awards dinner Sunday in Atlanta celebrating black achievement, Michelle Obama said her husband is the person America needs in the White House right now and was critical of anyone who would "dismiss this moment as an illusion, a fairy tale." He is the right candidate "not because of the color of his skin, but because of the quality and consistency of his character," she said.

ACROSS THE NATION

NYC hits tourism record

NEW YORK (AP)—With a falling dollar sweetening the deal for international travelers, a record-setting number of tourists visited the city last year, spending an estimated $28 billion, tourism officials said Sunday. With a final count still pending, the city's tourism office said an estimated 46 million people had visited the city in 2007—up 5 percent from 2006. The jump was largely due to visitors from other countries, who numbered an estimated 8.5 million—a growth of 17 percent. George Fertitta, chief executive of city tourism office NYC & Company, said the visitors were drawn by more than a favorable exchange rate and the city's international marketing efforts.

Eagle death toll now at 22 after mishap

ANCHORAGE, Alaska (AP)—Most of the 30 bald eagles who survived a disastrous dive into a truck full of fish guts are close to recovery, said officials at the Kodiak National Wildlife Refuge. They say two birds have died, but most of the remaining have perked up and may soon be released. Another 20 eagles died after the birds mobbed the uncovered truck at Ocean Beauty Seafoods on Friday. Workers from the seafood plant and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service washed the birds in dishwashing soap to help remove the fish oil. The birds spent the night drying out in a warehouse space, Gary Wheeler of the Kenai National Wildlife Refuge told the Anchorage Daily News.

Oregon rancher ends cross-country ride

HENDERSONVILLE, N.C. (AP)—An Oregon rancher who set off on a cross-country horseback ride seven months ago in search of what's good in America dismounted Sunday, feeling encouraged by the spirit and stories of the people he met. Bill Inman began his journey June 2 because he felt distress over how the country was being portrayed in news coverage and on TV shows. He rode his 16-year-old thoroughbred-quarter horse Blackie. His wife, Brenda, and a four-person support crew joined him on the trip through eight states. Among the people he met was a Wyoming deputy sheriff who drove 25 miles through a thunderstorm to bring dinner to him and his wife, and all 17 people of a Colorado town who came out to see him ride off.

Woman, 4 children die in Texas fire

LAREDO, Texas (AP)—Fire destroyed a mobile home where two families had been living for two weeks, killing a woman and four children, authorities said Sunday. Three adults, an infant and two children under age 4 escaped the Saturday morning blaze, said Eloy Vega, a spokesman for the Laredo Fire Department. Griselda Ruiz, three of her children and one other child died in the fire, said Webb County Medical Examiner Corinne Stern. The children were between the ages of 2 and 6. The fire appeared to have started near the middle of the mobile home, which is also where the door was, neighbors said. The cause of the fire is still under investigation, authorities said.

Asia

Dutch troops kill 4 in friendly fire

BAGRAM, Afghanistan (AP)—Dutch troops in Afghanistan killed two of their own men during a nighttime battle, and separately two allied Afghan soldiers they mistook for enemies, the Defense Ministry said Sunday.

"Darkness, the weather conditions and the confused situation" played a role in the mistake Saturday in the southern Afghan province of Uruzgan, Gen. Dick Berlijn, the top Dutch military commander, said in a statement.

Opposing fighters were in between Dutch units during the fighting several miles northwest of Camp Hadrian, near Deh Rawod.

The two Afghan soldiers, who were not "recognizably in uniform," also were killed Saturday after they approached a wounded Dutch soldier six miles to the south, Berlijn said.

Military police were investigating both incidents.

In the most famous friendly fire case of the Afghan conflict, Pat Tillman, a former U.S. football player who became an Army ranger, was killed in April 2004 by fellow troops near the Pakistani border.

In August, a U.S. warplane mistakenly dropped a 500-pound bomb on British troops after they called for air support in Afghanistan, killing three soldiers and seriously wounding two others.

And in 2002, four Canadian soldiers were killed when an American F-16 pilot on a night patrol dropped a 500-pound bomb on Canadian troops conducting a live-fire training exercise near the southern city of Kandahar. The pilot apparently mistook the Canadians for enemy forces and thought he was acting in self-defense, U.S. officials have said.

The Dutch soldiers killed Saturday were identified as Pvt. Wesley Schol, 20, and Cpl. Aldert Poortema, 22. The ministry did not release the names and ranks of the Afghan soldiers.

Around 1,650 Dutch are serving in Uruzgan province as part of the NATO mission there. The soldiers who were killed were part of an operation in which several hundred Dutch and Afghan soldiers are attempting to gauge prospects for refugees currently sheltering in the Deh Rawod bazaar to return home, Berlijn said.

Suharto health status sharply deteriorating

JAKARTA, Indonesia (AP)—Family members said they would leave it to doctors to decide if former dictator Suharto should be removed from life support after almost all of his organ functions failed. Physicians described his condition as "very critical."

Suharto

The 86-year-old had serious problems with his heart, lungs and kidneys and remained hooked to a ventilator, said Marjo Subiandono, the chief presidential doctor.

Suharto, whose 32-year regime was widely regarded as one of the 20th century's most brutal and corrupt, was rushed to the hospital on Jan. 4. Family members who have since camped out near his room were preparing themselves for the worst after learning Friday that he had suffered multiple organ failure.

Subiandono said doctors spoke with them twice Sunday to explain that "he only had a 50-50 chance of survival" and that the situation could quickly deteriorate. He said they left it to the medical team to decide what to do, including the possibility of removing him from life support.

The retired five-star general was ousted in 1998 amid massive student protests and nationwide riots, opening the way for democracy in this predominantly Muslim nation of 235 million people. He withdrew from public life, venturing from his comfortable villa on a leafy lane in the capital, Jakarta, only to attend family functions or for medical emergencies.

A series of strokes in recent years have left Suharto with permanent brain damage and impaired speech—keeping him from facing trial.

WINTER RITUAL AP

Japanese physical fitness enthusiasts pray while dipping in cold water at Teppozu Inari Shinto shrine in Tokyo Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008. Some 50 enthusiasts, wearing only white loincloths and headbands, took part in the winter ritual to keep themselves fit and display their perseverance.

Pakistan poll shows suspicion of leaders

ISLAMABAD, Pakistan (AP)—Nearly half of Pakistanis surveyed suspect that government agencies or government-linked politicians killed Benazir Bhutto, according to an opinion poll, highlighting popular mistrust in the country's U.S.-allied president ahead of elections next month.

Bhutto, an opposition leader and former prime minister, was killed in a gun and suicide bomb attack on Dec. 27 that the government of President Pervez Musharraf has blamed on Islamic extremists.

Bhutto, who had been threatened by militants before, was a secular politician popular in the United States and other Western countries for her vocal opposition to hardline Islam.

Bomb in southern Thailand kills eight troops

BANGKOK, Thailand (AP)—Suspected Muslim insurgents killed eight soldiers Monday in a bombing and shooting attack in one of Thailand's restive southern provinces, the army spokesman said.

The soldiers were on a routine morning patrol in the Chanae district of Narathiwat province when a bomb hidden on the road exploded as their vehicle passed, said the spokesman, Col. Akara Thiprote.

After the blast, suspected insurgents attacked the vehicle with a barrage of gunfire, leaving no survivors, he said.

More than 2,700 people have been killed in Thailand's Muslim-majority southernmost provinces of Pattani, Yala and Narathiwat, and some parts of neighboring Songkhla, since a long-simmering Islamic separatist insurgency flared in January 2004.

The government has made little progress in curbing the violence, despite the presence of nearly 40,000 police and soldiers.

Drive-by shootings and bombings occur almost daily, as rebels continue efforts to scare Buddhist residents away from the area.

ASIAN BRIEFS

SKorea ready for summit with North

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—South Korea's president-elect said Monday that he was willing to meet North Korean leader Kim Jong Il anytime to resolve the protracted tensions over the communist country's nuclear weapons programs. Lee, a conservative Seoul mayoral who won last month's presidential election, also stressed the need to bolster ties with the United States, saying that would help develop relations between the two Koreas. "If it will be a help to resolve the North Korean nuclear issue and improve South-North Korean relations, I can meet him anytime," Lee Myung-bak told a news conference in Seoul. Lee, who is to be inaugurated on Feb. 25, said he hopes the summit would take place in South Korea.

US commander of Pacific Fleet arrives in China for talks

BEIJING (AP)—The top U.S. naval commander in the Pacific met with Chinese officials Monday on his first visit since China refused permission for an American aircraft carrier to make a holiday port call in Hong Kong. Adm. Timothy Keating, commander of U.S. Pacific Command, arrived on his second visit to Beijing since he took up his post in March. He conferred with Chinese Foreign Minister Yang Jiechi in a closed meeting early Monday, and was set to meet with top military officials before going to Shanghai on Tuesday and then southern Guangdong province.

9 police killed in Taliban attack

KANDAHAR, Afghanistan (AP)—A pair of militant attacks killed nine police officers in southern Afghanistan Sunday. Taliban militants killed eight officers in an attack on a police checkpoint in Kandahar province, said Sadullah Khan, a police officer in neighboring Neven district. A suicide bomber killed another policeman and wounded eight other people when he blew himself up in a housing compound in the town of Lashkar Gah in neighboring Helmand province, officials said. Guards challenged the bomber when he tried to enter the house of a regional police commander and the man detonated himself, killing the policemen and wounding two children, four civilians and two other police officers.

China closes 11,000 mines in crackdown

BEIJING (AP)—China has closed more than 11,000 small coal mines as part of a two-year-old safety crackdown aimed at stemming the industry's high death toll, the government reported Sunday. The total of 11,155 represents 45 percent of all small mines slated for closure, according to a report on the central government's official Web site. Reasons cited for closure include failure to obtain proper permits or safety equipment, causing undue damage to the environment, and exclusion from government economic plans. Small mines are responsible for most of the deaths in Chinese mining industry, which last year claimed 3,786 lives. The 2007 death toll marks a major improvement from the year before, but still leaves China's mines as the world's deadliest.

World

Bush insists Iran biggest terror sponsor

ABU DHABI, United Arab Emirates (AP)—President Bush gently nudged authoritarian Arab allies Sunday to satisfy frustrated desires for democracy in the Mideast and saved his harshest criticism for Iran, branding it "the world's leading state-sponsor of terror."

Speaking in this Persian Gulf country, about 150 miles from the shores of Iran, Bush said Tehran threatens nations everywhere and that the United States was "rallying friends around the world to confront this danger before it is too late."

The warning about Iran was much tougher than Bush's admonition about spreading democracy in the Middle East, which had been billed as the central theme of his speech.

In a region of autocratic rulers, Bush did not single out any country for criticism. He spoke about democracy in a deeply undemocratic country, the United Arab Emirates, where an elite of royal rulers makes virtually all the decisions. Large numbers of foreign resident workers have few legal or human rights, including no right to protest working conditions.

"To the people of the Middle East: We hear your cries for justice," Bush said. "We share your desire for a free and prosperous future. And as you struggle to find your voice and make your way in this world, the United States will stand with you."

Usually averse to sightseeing, Bush rode out into the sand dunes to the desert encampment of Abu Dhabi's crown prince, Sheik Mohammed Bin Zayed Al Nahyan. He let Bush hold one of his prize falcons. Later, Bush returned to his suite in the opulent Emirates Palace Hotel, constructed at a cost of more than $3 billion and reputed to be the most expensive hotel ever built.

MASSIVE PROTEST AP

Tens of thousands of opposition supporters rally to protest what they denounced as massive vote fraud that helped U.S.-allied Mikhail Saakashvili win a second presidential term in downtown Tbilisi, Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008. Main opposition leader Levan Gachechiladze and his supporters denounced the official election count as a sham, saying it reflected a massive government effort to rig the vote. They said election officials responsible for ballot tinkering must be prosecuted, and demanded a runoff between Saakashvili and Gachechiladze.

AP

US President George W. Bush holds a falcon with Crown Prince of Adu Dhabi Sheik Mohammed bin Zayed Al Nahyan at the Royal Stables at the Al Asayl Racing and Equestrian Club, Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008, near the town of Sowaihan in United Arab Emirates.

Iraqi Shiites and Sunnis criticize Kurds

BAGHDAD (AP)—Iraqi Arab lawmakers from rival sects joined forces Sunday to criticize what they claim is overreaching by the Kurds, alleging the powerful U.S.-backed minority's go-it-alone style in oil and other major issues threatens national unity.

The 145 Shiite, Sunni and other legislators signaled their opposition to Kurdish ambitions in the disputed northern city of Kirkuk and in negotiating deals with foreign oil companies without involving the central government.

"There must be a formula for maintaining the unity of Iraq and the distribution of its wealth," said secular lawmaker Osama al-Nijifi, reading from a declaration at a news conference in the capital. "Oil and gas are a national wealth, and we are concerned about those who want to go it alone when it comes to signing deals," he said.

The declaration, which was careful not to mention the Kurdish government by name, could create new tensions among Sunni Arab, Shiite and Kurdish groups.

Iran agrees to answer nuclear questions

VIENNA, Austria (AP)—Iran has promised the U.N.'s chief nuclear inspector it will answer all remaining questions about its past nuclear activities within four weeks, including secret activities the U.S. suspects were linked to a weapons program, officials said Sunday.

The time limit was announced by the spokeswoman for Mohamed ElBaradei, chief of the International Atomic Energy Agency, at the end of his talks in Tehran with Iranian leaders.

Iran is under two sets of U.N. Security Council sanctions for its refusal to freeze uranium enrichment, a potential pathway to nuclear arms, and Washington is pushing for additional U.N. penalties.

A recent U.S. intelligence assessment that it probably shut down a clandestine weapons program three years ago have led to increased resistance from permanent Security Council members Russia and China, which have strategic and trade ties with Iran.

Unusual pair takes over in Guatemala

GUATEMALA CITY (AP)—Guatemala's new president, Alvaro Colom received training as a Mayan priest. His vice president is a heart surgeon.

As the two men prepare to take office on Monday, Guatemalans are hoping for some healing.

After a 36-year civil war, and still plagued by poverty, corruption and street gangs, "Guatemala is sick, very sick, in intensive care," says Vice President Rafael Espada, who gave up a decades-long medical career in Texas to return to Guatemala last year as Colom's running mate.

"But I think that if we use a smart methodology and do things well, it will be better in four years and in very good shape in 20," he told The Associated Press in an interview.

Guatemalans survive on less than $1 a day, on average. Mayan Indians, half the population of 13 million, suffer discrimination and economic exclusion in a country dominated by those of European ancestry. Colom and Espada are part of that elite, and are promising to move the country leftward, raise taxes, protect human rights and widen access to health care, education and housing.

WORLD BRIEFS

Once-jailed Paraguayan army chief to run for president

ASUNCION, Paraguay (AP)—Lino Cesar Oviedo, a former Paraguayan army chief freed last September from prison and cleared of a coup-plotting conviction, has formalized his presidential nomination under an opposition party. Oviedo, a populist with support among Paraguay's poor Indian majority, was the only contender on the primary ballot for his National Union of Ethical Citizens, an opposition party he founded in 2000. The April 20 presidential election will decide who succeeds President Nicanor Duarte, whose five-year term ends in August. Another major opposition candidate, former Catholic bishop Fernando Lugo, launched his campaign in 2007 with the Patriotic Alliance for Change—a coalition of leftist, labor, peasant and Indian groups.

Freed Colombia hostage reunited with son

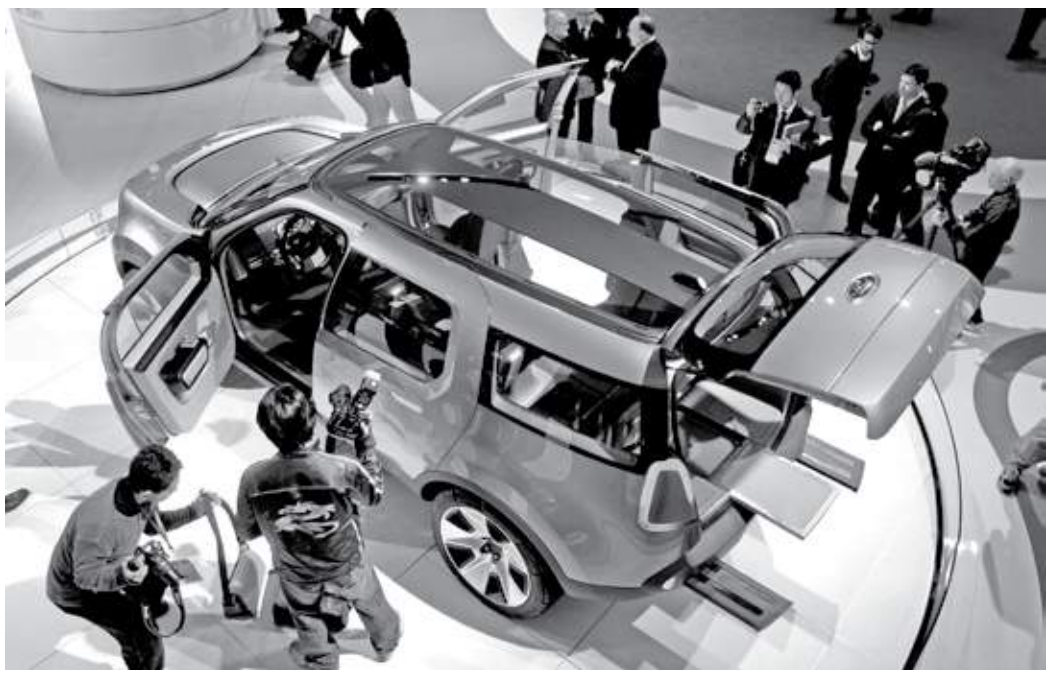
BOGOTA, Colombia (AP)—Recently released Colombian hostage Clara Rojas was reunited Sunday with her 3-year-old son, who was fathered by one of her guerrilla captors but taken away from her months after he was born. Rojas gave birth to Emmanuel in 2004, but the guerrillas separated her from the child when he was 8 months old. A peasant delivered him to Colombian social services, which—unaware of his true identity—placed him in the foster home in the capital, Bogota, where he has been for the past two years. Accompanied by her aging mother and brother, Rojas returned to Bogota on Sunday nearly six years after she was kidnapped by the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia, or FARC, and held captive in the jungle. The meeting between mother and son lasted about two hours.

4 dead, 7 hurt in Italian Alps avalanche

ROME (AP)—An avalanche in the Italian Alps killed four young Italian men who were riding motorized sleds and injured seven others, Italian state radio said early Monday. Three bodies were found Sunday evening in the first hours after the avalanche crashed down from Mount Maniva in the province of Brescia, police said. State radio reported early Monday that the fourth fatality was a man who died of his injuries after being taken to a hospital.

Overdrive

Auto industry shows off fuel-efficiency



AP

Journalists look over the Ford Explorer America concept at the North American International Auto Show in Detroit, Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008.

By KEN THOMAS
ASSOCIATED PRESS WRITER

DETROIT (AP)—Hybrids, advanced diesels and green alternatives are pushing aside the traditional displays of speed and chrome at this week's Detroit auto show, a nod to a new fuel-efficient reality for car makers.

Automakers, only weeks after Congress approved tougher fuel-efficiency requirements, are broadening their array of cars that get more on a gallon of gasoline, cutting carbon dioxide emissions and using alternative power sources.

Most of the vehicles and technologies have been in the pipeline for years, but the podiums at the North American International Auto Show should further signal a shifting direction for the industry after years of pushing more horsepower and speed.

"The industry all together has to show further and faster improvements on the fuel-efficiency side," said Dieter Zetsche, chief executive of Daimler AG, which has pushed a diesel strategy to improve its fuel efficiency.

The auto industry has made vehicles more efficient in recent years, but much of the gains have been offset by increases in horsepower and vehicle weight.

In 1987, for example, the average vehicle could accelerate to 60 miles per hour in 13.1 seconds, weighed 3,221 pounds and had a 118 horsepower engine, offering about the same power as a 2008 Nissan Versa subcompact, which offers 122 horsepower.

By 2007, according to data from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the average vehicle weighed 4,144 pounds, boasted a 223 horsepower engine and did zero to 60 in 9.6 seconds.

President Bush signed an energy bill in late December that requires the industry's fleet of new cars, sport utility vehicles, pickup trucks and vans to average 35 miles per gallon by 2020, a 40 percent increase and the first major changes since the 1970s.

With gas prices surging past $3 a gallon and calls for lawmakers to address global warming, the new law will challenge the industry and heavily influence future vehicles.

ON THE NET

2008 North American International Auto Show: http://www.naias.com

General Motors Corp., which created a green buzz last year with the Chevrolet Volt, is showing a similar plug-in hybrid concept on a Saturn Opel. GM also will extend its hybrid lineup, releasing a new Saturn Vue two-mode hybrid, which is expected to boost fuel economy by about 50 percent when it hits showrooms later this year.

Toyota Motor Corp., which has dominated the gas-electric hybrid market with its Prius and Camry hybrids, will raise the curtain Monday on the A-BAT, a hybrid pickup truck built on a car platform.

Even niche, luxury carmakers are getting in the advanced hybrid act. Fisker Automotive, an Irvine, Calif., startup, will show a plug-in hybrid sports sedan that is estimated to start at about $80,000.

Sandy Stojkovski, a fuel economy expert and director of vehicle engineering at Ricardo Inc., estimated that more than half of the vehicles by 2020 will need some kind of hybrid configuration to meet the new standards.

"There has to be some additional technologies brought in and in greater volume such as the hybrids and mass quantities of the improved engines," Stojkovski said.

Still, auto industry officials note that many consumers are turned off by the higher costs of a hybrid vehicle, typically $4,000 to $5,000 more, and more modest alternatives are needed.

Ford Motor Co. is taking a practical approach through its new EcoBoost engine, a more fuel-efficient powertrain that it plans to use in about 500,000 vehicles in North America during the next five years. The engine is much more cost-effective than a hybrid, using direct-injection and turbocharging technologies.

"We needed a solution that would affect millions of cars—not thousands or hundreds but millions. And a lot of the advanced technology stuff, which eventually will play in the future, is a ways away," said Sue Cischke, Ford's senior vice president for sustainability, environment and safety engineering.

Others are pointing to diesels, which can provide about a 25 percent boost in fuel efficiency.

Daimler showed its GLK compact sport utility vehicle, offering a diesel option that can get up to 35 mpg. BMW AG, meanwhile, showed advanced diesel versions of the X5 sport utility vehicle and a 3-Series passenger car.

Car makers have been testing advanced vehicles for several years, including hydrogen fuel cells and plug-in hybrids, with the hopes that the technologies will improve and become more viable.

Chrysler LLC, which has ranked near the bottom in fuel efficiency ratings, on Monday is showing the prototypes from a new green strategy: a Jeep with a lithium-ion battery pack and diesel hybrid engine, a Dodge ZEO electric concept sports wagon, and a Chrysler fuel-cell vehicle.

While analysts caution that futuristic vehicles frequently receive attention and acclaim at auto shows but rarely reach the showroom floor, this time may be different.

CRUISIN'

1954 Kaiser Darrin

By GREG ZYLA
(C) 2008 KING FEATURES SYND., INC.

Q: Greg, I wrote you many years ago about the 1954 Kaiser Darrin. Six-cylinder engines powered most Darrins, yet some had Cadillac V-8s under the hood. How did this happen, and what are they worth today and beyond?—Edward P., Boston

A: Edward, background on the Kaiser Darrin finds the late Howard Darrin as the chief designer, who drew up the plans in 1952 while working for Kaiser. The car was built on a Henry J chassis, and a 90-horsepower Willys 161-cubic-inch, six-cylinder engine powered the original 430 Darrins.

The car was futuristic in every sense, with a two-seat fiberglass body, Cyclops-style front radiator opening, sliding doors and a three-position Landau hood. It was truly one of America's unique sports cars, and just one year behind the introduction of the '53 Corvette.

Although the car was intriguing, the Kaiser car company went belly up in 1954, and Darrin purchased the last 100 Kaiser Darrins from Kaiser Corp.

Darrin then installed powerful Cadillac V-8 engines and sold them through his personally owned dealership in Los Angeles. The V-8 powered Darrin could do 145 mph and sold for $4,400, while the 90-horsepower version, which had a top speed of just over 90 mph, sold for $3,600. Those lucky enough to own a Kaiser Darrin have a very unique piece of automotive history on their hands.

As for current prices, according to a recent auction in Collector Car Trader, there is a six-cylinder, fully restored 1954 going for $79,900. You'll easily go six figures for a Cadillac-powered Darrin, and I expect the price to rise substantially as the years go by.

Write to Greg Zyla in care of King Features Weekly Service, P.O. Box 536475, Orlando, FL 32853-6475, or send an e-mail to gzyla@ptd.net.

Rules of the rude—er, road

By RALPH VARTABEDIAN
(C) 2008, LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES—Want to see how Americans behave? Take a drive. There is a lot of civil and decent behavior on the road. On the other hand, I see a lot of this kind of driving:

1. Harassing older drivers.

I constantly observe motorists, typically middle-age folks, flashing lights, honking horns and waving arms at older drivers. Yes, we all sometimes become impatient or annoyed at drivers who go too slowly, hesitate when changing lanes or violate the law in innocuous ways. In general, expressing road rage is a bad habit and a potentially dangerous one around Los Angeles, given the number of assaults that occur. But getting on the case of older drivers is really lowbrow.

2. Gap closers.

If you turn on your turn signal to change lanes, a lot of other motorists automatically hit the accelerator to prevent you from moving ahead of them. Of all the insane and discourteous behaviors, this one has to be the most common. Exactly how much time can a person save by preventing one motorist from changing lanes?

3. Line cutters.

This problem is the opposite of the above issue, occurring when an obnoxious and self-important bozo attempts to cut in a long line of cars waiting at a transition road. You can see other motorists trying to prevent this by making sure there are no gaps where people can cut in. But this reaction seems like a good way to cause a rear-end collision.

4. Illegal mufflers.

Over the last several decades, California has watered down its vehicle noise laws and reduced enforcement to the point that almost anything goes. As more people drive SUVs and trucks with modified exhaust systems, the amount of urban noise is growing. The worst are motorcycles with straight pipes, a problem serious enough that even major motorcycle owners' associations now condemn the equipment.

5. Tinted windows.

I wonder what's going on behind those windows that are so blackened it looks like a computer might be driving the car. Wild sex? Drug parties? Personal grooming? Dark tints on front side windows and windshields are illegal for good reason. They prevent drivers and pedestrians from making eye contact and ensuring that the other driver sees them. And they give police a real scare during traffic stops. The fines for this violation, which in Los Angeles County run about $100, should be sharply increased.

6. Wandering trucks.

Southern California has the worst traffic congestion in the nation, but it has an added problem in the number of big rigs that use the freeways. Every day I see trucks that wander out of their lanes or are so big they cannot stay inside their lanes on curves.

7. Extreme speeders.

You can see these suicidal maniacs driving above 90 mph on the freeway, weaving around heavy traffic and coming up to other vehicles' rear ends at breathtaking rates of closure. It's another problem that is growing because police have reduced the emphasis on routine traffic patrol.

8. Parking hogs.

Some folks prize their brand-new $40,000-plus vehicles so much that they take up two parking spaces so they can avoid having their doors dinged. Whenever I see this, I try to squeeze into the slot, just to make the point that the rule is ONE space per car. Obviously, I have a number of door dings, but my car wears them as a badge of honor.

9. Distracted police.

I notice a lot of police officers engage in the same bad habits that they preach about to us civilians, including talking on their cell phones, typing on their computer terminals, speeding through residential neighborhoods and yakking with their buddies in the next seat while they pay scant attention to the road.

10. Cell-phone junkies.

Speaking of cell phones, the new law banning hand-held cellphone use goes into effect in July. It's one thing to get a brief call but another to be engaged in a long conversation while driving 10 mph less than other traffic. I don't count on the new law doing much good; the problem is divided attention, which a hands-free system will not really solve.

E-mail Vartabedian at ralph.vartabedian@latimes.com.

Life & Style

'Atonement' leads glitz-free Globes

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. (AP)—The first Golden Globe of the night went to Cate Blanchett for her supporting role in "I'm Not There"—and that pretty much said it all about the awards ceremony Sunday that was wiped out by the Hollywood writers strike.

Because Blanchett wasn't there. Neither was anyone present to accept the best drama award for "Atonement," the final award of the 31-minute, news conference-style fiasco that raced through 25 winners so fast, it was as if the Hollywood Foreign Press Association just wanted to get it over with.

No red carpet, no tipsy stars, and no big winners. "Atonement" led the field with seven nominations but won only twice, tying with three other films for the most honors.

But atonement was also on the minds of awards presenters who hope feuding producers and writers might mend fences so Hollywood can get back to business. After announcing the tragic period romance as best drama winner, the chief overseer of the Globes made a bold promise.

"Rest assured that next year, the Golden Globe awards will be back bigger and better than ever," said HFPA president Jorge Camara. The association was forced to curtail its glitzy televised banquet into a break-neck news conference without a nominee in sight.

"I wish circumstance would allow me to be there," said Blanchett, the supporting actress winner for the Bob Dylan tale "I'm Not There," in a statement after what's sure to go down as one of the strangest awards shows in the annals of Hollywood. Instead of the usual three hours of star-studded back-slapping that drags on forever, this one flew by in half an hour, with no winners on hand and prizes announced by TV entertainment show hosts.

Dayna Devon announces Julian Schnabel as the winner for Best Director, Motion Picture for his work on "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly" at the 65th Annual Golden Globes, Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008, in Beverly Hills, Calif. AP

"I never thought in my wildest dreams I'd be up here," said E!'s Giuliana Rancic. She added that she supports the striking Writers Guild of America, "not because without the strike there'd be no way I'd ever be standing up here at the Golden Globes presenting. ... Next year I hope it's extremely different from this year."

Actors and filmmakers skipped the Golden Globes because of the two-month-old strike by the guild, which had planned pickets outside the show if organizers had tried to do their usual televised ceremony. Globe planners and NBC canceled the three-hour bash in favor of the news conference, attended by about 600 politely clapping journalists, TV crews, HFPA members, guests and publicists in business attire.

"We all hope that the writers strike will be over soon so that everyone can go back to making good movies and television programs which is what the Golden Globes were designed to celebrate," Camara said at the start of the show.

Besides "Atonement," three other films also won two awards: the crime saga "No Country for Old Men," the bloody musical "Sweeney Todd: The Demon Barber of Fleet Street" and the personal memoir "The Diving Bell and the Butterfly."

"Thank you to the Hollywood Foreign Press," "No Country for Old Men" co-star Javier Bardem said in a statement after he was named best supporting actor for his role as a merciless killer. "It is a great honor to have been recognized with this award in a time when there are so many outstanding performances in this category." The film also won the screenplay honor for writer-directors Ethan and Joel Coen.

"Sweeney Todd" was picked as best musical or comedy and earned Johnny Depp the Globe for best actor in the musical-comedy category. "Diving Bell" was named best foreign-language film and received the directing honor for Julian Schnabel.

Among other winners: Daniel Day-Lewis, best dramatic actor for the historical epic "There Will Be Blood"; Marion Cotillard, best musical or comedy actress for the Edith Piaf saga "La Vie En Rose"; and Julie Christie, best dramatic actress for the Alzheimer's drama "Away From Her."

Therodenttale"Ratatouille"—directed by Brad Bird, who made Academy Award winner "The Incredibles"—was named best animated film.

Among TV recipients, Jeremy Piven won for his supporting role as an acerbic agent in HBO's "Entourage," his first win after three previous nominations. Samantha Morton supporting actress for "Longford."

Pearl Jam's Eddie Vedder won the prize for best original song in a movie for "Guaranteed," featured in director Sean Penn's road drama "Into the Wild."

On strike since Nov. 5, the Writers Guild refused to let union members work on the Globes. Although the guild called off pickets it had planned outside the news conference, the strike left one of Hollywood's brightest and giddiest nights in shambles.

Reactions to the Golden Globe Awards

"I kinda didn't want to watch, it would just make me tense or nervous, so I went out to see a movie at four (o'clock) and I knew I wouldn't be home until it was announced. I knew if my phone was ringing when I walked into my hotel room that I would have won. And it was. Nobody calls a loser."

—David Duchovny on how he learned he had won the Golden Globe for best actor in a TV series, musical or comedy for "Californication."

■ ■ ■

"There is not a star to be found."

—Billy Bush of "Access Hollywood," on the Golden Globe nominees who stayed away from the event's strike-shortened news conference.

■ ■ ■

"We want to say to Jorge, we think you should be negotiating the writers' strike. Because if you can get 'Entertainment Tonight,' 'The Insider,' 'Inside Edition' and 'Extra' on one stage, you can do anything."

—Dayna Devon of "Extra," referring to Hollywood Foreign Press Association President Jorge Camara, who decided to have this year's winners announced by representatives of those and other shows.

■ ■ ■

"Rest assured that next year the Golden Globes will be back bigger and better than ever."

—Hollywood Foreign Press Association President Jorge Camara wrapping up the 30-minute news conference that substituted for the strike-canceled Golden Globe Awards show.

■ ■ ■

"This is a picture we love. It's finding its place in the U.S. and in movie history. We're thrilled."

—James Schamus, co-president of Focus Features, whose film "Atonement" won the Golden Globe for best drama.

■ ■ ■

"And yes, I yearn for the days of Jack Nicholson mooning the Golden Globes, Christine Lahti getting locked in the bathroom. But we have that for next year."

—Mary Hart of "Entertainment Tonight," who announced some of this year's Golden Globe winners during the event's strike-shortened news conference.

■ ■ ■

"At the end of the day it's a woman imitating a man."

—Billy Bush of "Access Hollywood," expressing surprise after announcing that Cate Blanchett had won the supporting actress award in a motion picture for her portrayal of Bob Dylan in "I'm Not There."

■ ■ ■

"Thank you to the Hollywood Foreign Press! It is a great honor to have been recognized with this award in a time when there are so many outstanding performances in this category."

—Javier Bardem, in a statement e-mailed after learning he had won the supporting actor award in a motion picture for "No Country for Old Men."

BAPTISMAL RITE AP

Pope Benedict XVI baptizes a child in the Sistine Chapel at the Vatican, Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008. The Pontiff baptized 13 babies in the Sistine Chapel during Sunday Mass, which he celebrated at the altar at the foot of Michelangelo's "Last Judgment" wall fresco.

'Bucket List' kicks off with $19.5M take

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Score one for the geezers. "The Bucket List," the tale of two cancer patients who decide to travel the world before they die, bested movies about treasure hunting, bumbling crooks and pirates to top the weekend box office, according to studio estimates Sunday.

"This was definitely a win for the older audience," Paul Dergarabedian, president of box-office tracker Media By Numbers, said of the movie, which stars 70-year-old actors Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman. "The conventional wisdom is the younger audience drives the box office."

The Warner Bros. release directed by Rob Reiner "skews to older audiences, but I think the star power is what brought the audience," Dergarabedian said. "Never underestimate the clout of the older movie audience."

In its first week in national distribution, "The Bucket List" brought in $19.5 million at more than 2,900 theaters. It initially had opened on Christmas Day in limited release.

The film was closely followed by the comedy "First Sunday," featuring Ice Cube and Tracy Morgan as hapless petty criminals who scheme to rob a church but end up being rewarded with a lesson about second chances. The Sony Screen Gems film banked $19 million at 2,200 theaters.

"These two films appealed to different audiences and both did very well," Dergarabedian said. "January is not known as a hot month for box office."

The No. 1 box office draw for three consecutive weeks - Disney's "National Treasure: Book of Secrets" with Nicolas Cage - dropped to fourth place, with $11.5 million in tickets at 3,400 theaters. It has banked more than $187 million in domestic receipts.

The independent film "Juno," featuring Ellen Page as a whip-smart pregnant teen, locked up third position, continuing its commercial and critical run and building momentum as Hollywood's awards season progresses. The film had three nominations for Sunday's Golden Globes, among them best musical or comedy and an acting honor for Page.

With $71.2 million already in the bank, "Juno" is on its way to becoming Fox Searchlight's biggest hit ever, approaching "Sideways" at $71.5 million.

Paramount Vantage's "There Will Be Blood," starring Daniel Day-Lewis in a tale of greed and violence during California's oil boom in the early 20th century, continued to turn in impressive numbers in limited release. It took in nearly $2 million at 129 theaters, and its $15,000 per theater average easily outdistanced other movies in the marketplace.

Estimated ticket sales for Friday through Sunday at U.S. and Canadian theaters, according to Media By Numbers LLC. Final figures will be released Monday.

1. "The Bucket List," $19.5 million.
2. "First Sunday," $19 million.
3. "Juno," $14 million.
4. "National Treasure: Book of Secrets," $11.5 million.
5. "Alvin and the Chipmunks," $9.1 million.
6. "I Am Legend," $8.1 million.
7. "One Missed Call," $6.1 million.
8. "P.S. I Love You," $5 million.
9. "The Pirates Who Don't Do Anything: A Veggie Tales Movie," $4.4 million
10. "Atonement," $4.3 million.

Spears due in court for major hearing

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Britney Spears' effort to regain visitation rights with her two small children is back on the court docket for what an attorney described Sunday as "the most significant hearing in the case so far."

Police and emergency medical technicians who were summoned to her home Jan. 3 in a standoff involving her refusal to return the boys to her ex-husband, Kevin Federline, will testify Monday, probably behind closed doors, his lawyer said.

"I don't know if she will be there," Mark Vincent Kaplan told The Associated Press, but he suggested she would have to appear in person if she wants to press her request to see her children. "You can't phone this one in."

If Spears comes to court, Kaplan said she would be expected to testify. "She will have the opportunity to persuade the court that she can have some visitation under monitored conditions," he said.

AP

Britney Spears arrives for the grand opening party of LAX nightclub at the Luxor hotel-casino in Las Vegas, in a Sept. 1, 2007 file photo.

Phone and e-mail messages requesting comment from Spears' attorneys Sunday afternoon were not immediately returned.

Kaplan said he knew it was only a temporary measure when he obtained emergency court orders two weeks ago granting sole physical and legal custody to Federline.

"These are very, very draconian orders," Kaplan said. "Because of that the court wanted to have a hearing to give her and her attorneys the opportunity to refute some of the declarations."

"No judge likes making orders terminating a person's involvement with their kids," Kaplan said.

Fireworks explode in the skies over the Queen Mary 2 in New York Harbor, Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008.
AP

Cunard's 3 Queen ships rendezvous in NYC

NEW YORK (AP)—The three Cunard Queen ships—the Queen Mary 2, Queen Elizabeth 2 and the new Queen Victoria—met in the waters off lower Manhattan Sunday night, with the Statue of Liberty as a backdrop and fireworks marking the once-in-a-lifetime event.

The three grand ships, twinkling in the winter darkness, lined up in front of the Statue of Liberty, holding their positions for a few minutes after 8 p.m. as fireworks lit the sky. Then they slowly moved across New York Harbor, the Queen Mary leading the other two.

Thousands of ordinary New Yorkers lined the waterfront to watch the spectacle. Manhattan resident Nadine Ellman, who sailed twice on the QE2, stood in the rain and watched the ships, saying, "This is for the die-hards. I'm having such a good time."

John Stella, of Staten Island, called the sight of the three ships "amazing."

"You'll never see it like this again," he said.

This is the only time the three Queen ships will ever meet. The QE2, one of the world's most famous ships, will be decommissioned in the fall and turned into a floating five-star hotel in the United Arab Emirates.

The Queen Victoria, which was launched just last month, crossed the Atlantic from England in tandem with the QE2 for Sunday's event. The ships arrived early Sunday and spent the day docked in Manhattan before heading down the Hudson River to meet the QM2, which homeports in Brooklyn.

Philip Naylor, a Cunard official who oversaw the choreography of the three vessels, said the event required coordination with the Coast Guard and other agencies to close the waters near the Statue of Liberty to other boats and position the ships just right.

"We had to try to get a show," he said. "The ships are huge."

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Comedy, Drama • Rated PG13
Synopsis
Durell and LeeJohn are best friends and bumbling petty criminals. When Durell learns that his ex-girlfriend plans to move to another state with their son–unless they can get her $17,000 to pay off a debt–they come up with a desperate scheme to rob their neighborhood church. But when the duo fumbles their way through the break-in, they discover someone has beaten them to the punch.

The Bucket List
Friday 4:10 7:15 9:30
Saturday 1:20 4:10 7:15 9:30
Sunday 1:20 4:10 7:15
Mon thru Thurs 4:10 7:15
Jack Nicholson, Morgan Freeman
Comedy, Drama • Rated PG13
Synopsis
A long time ago, Carter Chambers' philosophy professor suggested that his students compose a "bucket list," a collection of all the things they wanted to do, see and experience in life before they kicked the bucket. But while Carter was trying to define his private dreams and plans, reality intruded.

One Missed Call
Friday 4:25 7:25 9:40
Saturday 1:25 4:25 7:25 9:40
Sunday 1:25 4:25 7:25
Mon thru Thurs 4:25 7:25
Edward Burns, Shannyn Sossamon
Horror, Remake • Rated PG13
Synopsis
Beth Raymond is traumatized when she witnesses the gruesome deaths of two friends just days apart. Even more disturbing, she knows that both of them had received chilling cell phone messages—actual recordings of their own horrifying last moments. Impossibly, the calls were received days before they died, but each death occurred precisely when and how the messages foretold.

National Treasure: Book of Secrets
Friday 4:00 7:00 9:45
Saturday 1:00 4:00 7:00 9:45
Sunday 1:00 4:00 7:00
Mon thru Thurs 4:00 7:00
Nicolas Cage, Diane Kruger
Action, Adventure • Rated PG

The Water Horse: Legend of the Deep
Friday 4:20 7:30 9:50
Saturday 1:15 4:20 7:30 9:50
Sunday 1:15 4:20 7:30
Mon thru Thurs 4:20 7:30
Emily Watson, Ben Chaplin
Family, Adventure • Rated PG

I Am Legend
Friday 4:15 7:20 10:00
Saturday 1:10 4:15 7:20 10:00
Sunday 1:10 4:15 7:20
Mon thru Thurs 4:15 7:20
Will Smith, Alice Braga
Action, Sci-Fi, Adventure • Rated PG13

Alvin & The Chipmunks
Friday 4:05 7:10 9:35
Saturday 1:05 4:05 7:10 9:35
Sunday 1:05 4:05 7:10
Mon thru Thurs 4:05 7:10
Jason Lee, Cameron Richardson
Comedy, Family • Rated PG

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Christina Aguilera has baby boy

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Christina Aguilera has given birth to a boy, the pop singer announced on her Web site Sunday.

"Christina Aguilera and Jordan Bratman are proud to announce the birth of their son Max Liron Bratman," the brief message said. "He is a beautiful, healthy baby boy."

The baby was born Saturday night and weighs 6 pounds, 2 ounces. Aguilera, 27, was "resting and doing well," according to the message on her Web site, http://www.christinaaguilera.com/ .

Aguilera said that Saturday was "a very joyful and special day for Jordan and I."

There was no immediate response Sunday to several calls seeking additional comment from Aguilera's representatives.

Aguilera and Bratman married in 2005. The four-time Grammy Award winning singer has said she learned she was pregnant during her recent "Back to Basics" tour.

Christina Aguilera is shown in this, Feb. 11, 2007, file photo in Los Angeles. AP

Nicole Richie, rocker welcome baby girl

Richie

LOS ANGELES (AP)—"The Simple Life" just got more complicated for Nicole Richie: She's a first-time mom.

Richie, 26, gave birth Friday at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center to a daughter named Harlow Winter Kate Madden, People magazine reported on its Web site.

The father is Richie's 28-year-old boyfriend, Joel Madden, of the rock group Good Charlotte.

"We are very blessed she's healthy and beautiful and so good already," Madden told People on Saturday. "We are very happy."

Calls to the couple's representative at Handprint Entertainment, Richie's publicist and the hospital were not immediately returned Saturday.

Richie, the socialite daughter of singer Lionel Richie, is perhaps best known for costarring with Paris Hilton in the reality show "The Simple Life."

Last year, she spent 82 minutes in jail after being convicted of driving under the influence of drugs. She was arrested in December 2006 after witnesses reported seeing her Mercedes-Benz SUV headed the wrong way on a freeway in Burbank.

Courtney Thorne-Smith has a baby boy

Thorne-Smith

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Courtney Thorne-Smith has given birth to a baby boy, the actress' publicist said Sunday.

"The parents are thrilled, and the baby is healthy, well and beautiful," publicist Karen Samfilippo said.

Thorne-Smith delivered the baby—her first—at Cedars-Sinai Medical Center on Friday, Samfilippo said.

The father is Thorne-Smith's husband Roger Fishman, a media consultant. The couple named the boy Jacob Emerson Fishman.

Thorne-Smith, 40, is known for roles in several TV shows including "Melrose Place," "Ally McBeal" and "According to Jim."

Report: Bjork attacks news photographer

WELLINGTON, New Zealand (AP)—Icelandic singer Bjork attacked a newspaper photographer shortly after she arrived at New Zealand's Auckland International Airport on Sunday, local media reported.

Bjork, who is in the northern city of Auckland to perform at the Big Day Out concert on Friday, tore "New Zealand Herald" photographer Glenn Jeffrey's shirt after he photographed her arriving at the airport early Sunday, he told news agency New Zealand Press Association according to a report on Monday.

Jeffrey, a news photographer for 25 years, said Bjork was accompanied by a man who asked him not take photos.

"I took a couple of pictures ... and as I turned and walked away she came up behind me, grabbed the back of my black skivvy (T-shirt) and tore it," he told the agency.

"As she did this, she fell over, she fell to the ground," he said. "At no stage did I touch her or speak with her."

Bjork said nothing throughout the incident but her male companion was saying: "'B, don't do this, B, don't do this,'" Jeffrey said.

Jeffrey said he spoke with Auckland police about the incident later Sunday.

Bjork or a representative were not immediately available to comment on the report.

AP

Icelandic singer Bjork is seen after performing at the Live 8 Japan concert at Makuhari Messe in Makuhari on the outskirts of Tokyo in this July 2, 2005 file photo.

Concert honors jazz legend Peterson

TORONTO (AP)—Pianist Herbie Hancock and singer Nancy Wilson were among the stars taking the stage at a tribute concert celebrating the life of jazz legend Oscar Peterson whose piano wizardry inspired and influenced many.

"I don't call many people geniuses but Oscar Peterson is definitely one ... ," said Quincy Jones, the music impresario and record producer who recalled that he was 16 years old when he first heard Peterson opening a show for the Count Basie big band. "It doesn't get any better than this."

"I love being a part of a tribute to one of the greatest musicians to have ever lived," added Jones, in a speech to the more than 2,000 fans filling Roy Thomson Hall for the free Saturday afternoon concert called "Simply the Best."

Peterson died of kidney failure at his home in the Toronto suburb of Mississauga on Dec. 23 at age 82.

Wilson sang the ballad "Goodbye," while soprano Measha Brueggergosman, the Canadian opera singer, performed the gospel-like "Hymn to Freedom," one of Peterson's best-loved compositions.

Peterson's youngest child took the stage to recount memories of a doting father who loved to tease her and instilled in her a strong sense of self worth.

"I miss his voice, his laugh, his sense of humor, the way he would say the perfect thing to make me feel happy," said 16-year-old Celine, adding that she had wished her father would one day walk her down the aisle at her wedding.

"There are no words to describe the pain that me and everybody else in my family feel and I know it will never go away."

Other tributes came from Peterson's longtime friend, Canadian bandleader Phil Nimmons, and Canada's Governor General Michaelle Jean, the titular head of state.

"Touted as the `Maharajah of the keyboard,' Oscar Peterson has left an indelible mark on the cultural heritage of the entire world," Jean said. "Whether it was while accompanying the jazz legends, performing for royalty or playing for jazz lovers, he had an incredible ability to wow musicians and audiences alike with his dazzling artistic ingenuity."

The audience was also surprised by a phone call from singer-pianist Stevie Wonder which was played over the speakers.

Wonder said he was truly thankful for having met "O.P.," as Peterson was known by friends in the music industry, describing him as "a man who could play the piano so well that you could sing, dance and feel every emotion so strong."

Adopted daughter still resents exclusion from family photos

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: Please advise "Has Issues in New Hampshire" (Dec. 5) to speak up now. My husband and I were married when my daughter was 8. He adopted her, but even after that, when his family took photographs, she was excluded. She's now 29 and still remembers those hurtful occasions when she was not included.

Ironically, the sister who did it every year is now married and has an adopted son, so things have changed. But I deeply regret not saying something years ago because it affected the way my daughter feels about her aunt.

—WISER NOW, FARWELL, MICH.

DEAR WISER NOW: While most readers agreed that what the unofficial family photographer did was wrong, in fairness, not everyone did. Read on:

DEAR ABBY: I see nothing wrong with taking photos of various family groups. Both my family and my husband's do it. We take pictures of everyone—just the siblings; the parents and children; the parents, children and spouses; all the grandchildren; etc. "Marian" took pictures that included all the children, so stop whining.

—NINE IN PLEASANT GAP, PA.

DEAR ABBY: "Marian" is the one who should be excluded, for her stupidity. Our family is comprised of several blended families. We never use the words "step" or "half"—ever. It is always "my sister," "my brother," "my mother," "my father."

When a sister died suddenly at 47, we all grieved. When another was brutally murdered at 41, we all grieved. Both times, all the sisters approached to place a rose into the casket to honor our beloved sibling. Each time I turned around I saw my beloved "blended" family grieving as one.

My advice to "Marian" would be to buy a camera with a really wide-angle lens and leave nobody out.

—ELIZABETH IN WOODVILLE, TEXAS

DEAR ABBY: The letter about the stepmom who insists on taking a yearly photograph of "blood" family members only made me chuckle.

Years ago, when our daughter was 6 weeks old (her brother was almost 2), we made the four-hour drive to attend my husband's family reunion. The baby screamed the whole last half-hour of the ride. I nursed her as soon as we arrived and handed her off to a cousin so I could eat.

Before I could finish, we were "summoned" to the back yard, where several aunts were taking family pictures. I decided they would just have to do without our sleeping daughter. My husband and I posed with our son, but before we could get away, the cousin ratted us out. The baby, now screaming again, was presented to be added to the picture. The ladies were annoyed that they'd "wasted a shot," but aimed their cameras again.

Afterward, I looked down and was horrified to see our son had been picking his nose. So our branch of the family was recorded with a screaming infant, a daughter-in-law who was angry enough to chew broken glass, and a 2-year-old with both index fingers buried in his nose.

—DEL IN MOBILE, ALA.

DEAR ABBY: Out of my parents' six grandchildren, only two are biological; however, my parents make no distinction. "Marian" needs to be reminded that family is family. As far as our family is concerned, the "bonus children" are just as much "Calhouns" as the other grandkids. One of my favorite quotes is by Goldie Nash, who said, "Blood may be thicker than water, but love is thicker than blood."

—BRENDA Z., STAUNTON, VA.

■ ■ ■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■ ■ ■

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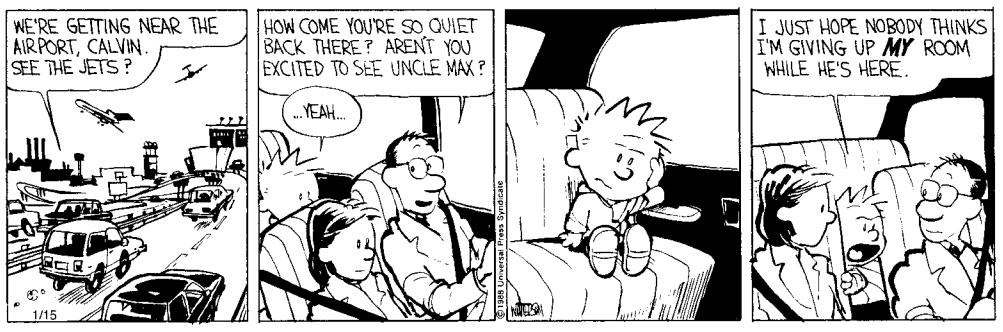
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson


WE'RE GETTING NEAR THE AIRPORT, CALVIN. SEE THE JETS?
HOW COME YOU'RE SO QUIET BACK THERE? AREN'T YOU EXCITED TO SEE UNCLE MAX?
...YEAH...
I JUST HOPE NOBODY THINKS I'M GIVING UP MY ROOM WHILE HE'S HERE.
1/15
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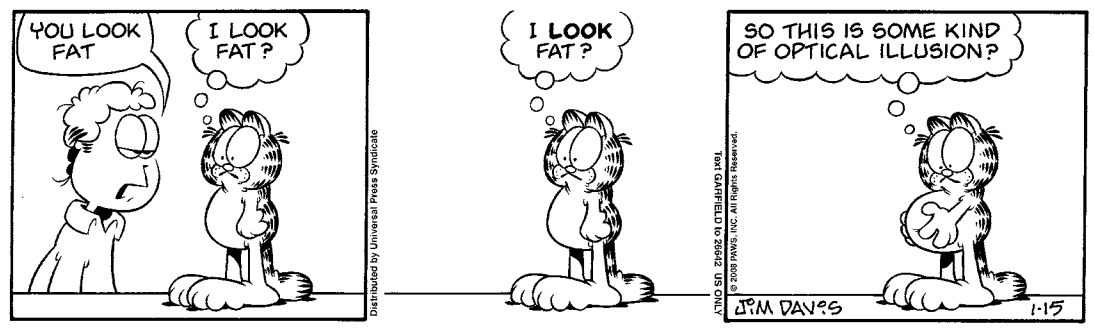
Garfield®

By Jim Davis


YOU LOOK FAT
I LOOK FAT?
I LOOK FAT?
SO THIS IS SOME KIND OF OPTICAL ILLUSION?
JIM DAVIS
1-15
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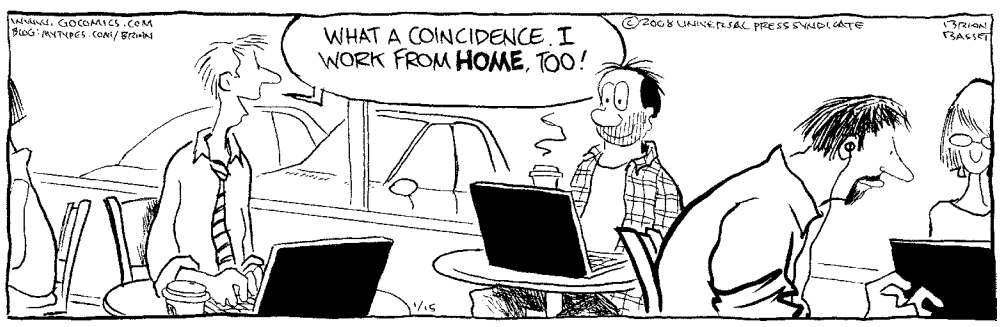
Adam@home

By Bryan Basset



The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

I'M THINKING ABOUT BREAKING UP WITH THAT GIRL I'VE BEEN SEEING.
THE TELE-PSYCHIC? HOW ARE YOU GOING TO DO IT?
I'M THINKING ABOUT BREAKING UP WITH THAT GIRL I'VE BEEN SEEING.
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GLENN MCCOY

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

ACROSS
1 Rug type
5 Poke
8 Korean War sitcom
12 Singer Vikki
13 Past
14 — podrida
15 Plankton component
16 Grow uncontrollably
18 Hotel guest's need
20 Curved moldings
21 Peaks (Abbr.)
22 Peninsula st.
23 Hee-haws
26 Fundamental idea
30 Atmosphere
31 Oz bigwig
32 Reason to say "alas"
33 Microsoft Windows feature
36 Hue
38 Moving truck
39 Unruly crowd
40 Skedaddle
43 Hasp fastener
47 "Lassie" actress
49 Valhalla VIP
50 Rue the run
51 Witness
52 Taboo action
53 Courts
54 Mole, e.g.
55 Raised, as crops

DOWN
1 Cicatrix
2 Head light?
3 Jason's ship
4 Music award
5 "Home, —"
6 "When you see — ..."
7 Derek and Diddley
8 Fairchild or Freeman
9 Lotion additive
10 — gin fizz
11 Scenery chewers
17 Sacred
19 Chess pcs.
22 Shriner's chapeau
23 Proscribe
24 Brazilian city
25 Illustrations
26 Tease
27 Hooter
28 Overly
29 Always, in verse
31 Pale
34 Brings out
35 Maze option
36 Food fish
37 Not square or circular
39 Shipboard companion
40 Cabbage salad
41 Gabrielle Chanel
42 Eight, in Acapulco
43 Get ready
44 Smell
45 Motion picture
46 Recognize
48 Ninny

Solution time: 21 mins.

O	A	H	U	■	S	R	S	■	A	R	T	S
M	I	E	N	■	H	O	T	■	B	A	I	O
E	D	A	M	■	A	C	E	R	B	I	T	Y
N	A	P	A	L	M	■	P	I	A	N	O	S
■	■	■	S	I	R	S	■	M	C	C	■	■
J	A	C	K	P	O	T	S	■	Y	O	U	R
O	R	O	■	S	C	R	E	E	■	A	S	A
G	R	U	B	■	K	I	N	G	S	T	O	N
■	■	■	T	O	P	■	P	T	A	H	■	■
A	S	H	R	A	M	■	I	D	E	A	L	S
Q	U	E	E	N	B	E	E	■	A	R	I	A
U	R	S	A	■	A	N	N	■	T	E	N	T
A	F	T	S	■	S	E	T	■	H	A	T	E

Yesterday's answer 1-15

1	2	3	4	■	5	6	7	■	8	9	10	11
12				■	13			■	14			
15				■	16			17				
18				19			■	20				
■	■	■	21			■	22			■	■	■
23	24	25			■	26				27	28	29
30			■	■	31			■	■	32		
33			34	35			■	36	37			
■	■	■	38			■	39			■	■	■
40	41	42			■	43				44	45	46
47					48			■	49			
50				■	51				52			
53				■	54				55			

STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Chad Lowe, 40; Mario Van Peebles, 51; Andrea Martin, 61; Margaret O'Brien, 71

Happy Birthday: You will accomplish far more this year if you just quietly move forward with your plans. Trust your own judgment and put your knowledge and expertise to use. Acting with confidence will show your ability to lead and to handle any challenge that comes your way. Your numbers are 11, 19, 21, 25, 33, 39

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): You will be a little anxious and idle time will be what leads to mistakes. Look at the big picture and, if you aren't happy with what you see, change it. You should be planning a trip or signing up to take a course that interests you. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Stick to what has to be finished and don't let anyone take your mind off your task at hand. If you fall short of your expectations, someone will be sure to point out your shortcoming. Don't be afraid to delegate smaller jobs. ✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): There will be no time to mull over things. Action will be the key to your success. Your intuition will be on the mark, so trust in your own judgment, not someone else's. ✪✪✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): If you feel you are too close to a situation to make a good decision, don't move forward. Look around you and see what everyone else is doing. It should give you an indication where you fit in and how you can proceed. Honesty will win favors. ✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): This is a perfect meet-and-greet day, especially where inspirational people are concerned. You can motivate and attract others. A love connection can be made or you can get closer to your current partner by discussing your future plans. ✪✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): If you complain or criticize others, you aren't likely to get anywhere. However, if you focus on implementing a couple of changes that will ease your stress, much can be accomplished. Start doing for yourself. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Don't take anything or anyone too seriously. Keep busy doing things that will eventually help you get ahead. Courses, hobbies, picking up information or spending time with someone experienced in a field you want to pursue will all work to your advantage. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): You may have to take an alternate route to get to where you belong. You will need to physically and mentally move in new directions. Keep on top of what everyone else is doing so you can outsmart any competition you face. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You should be spending time looking for love or doing something special with your current partner. Travel may entice you but you can accomplish just as much sticking close to home. It's the quality of time spent, not the price tag. ✪✪✪✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Listen and assess your situation. Someone will

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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give you a bird's eye view of what you need to do to accomplish your goals. Be smart and play your cards close to your chest. ✪✪

AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Consider your options and you will be able to fit far more into your schedule. Planning your next vacation will encourage you to be more productive. The impact you have on the people around you will buy you time and win you favors. ✪✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): You'll find it difficult to stick to one thing. Your mind will be wandering and you may need to question your motives. Don't let your heart lead your head or anger or jealousy ruin your day. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You investigate, determine what to do and react quickly and precisely. You are charming, sensitive, emotional and able to find solutions when any problems occur.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

9	5						2	
2	6			9		7		4
			3		6		8	
		1				9		
	2			7			1	
		4				8		
	3		9		1			
1		6		5			9	8
	8						7	3

Difficulty Level ★★ 1/15

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

7	2	3	4	9	6	1	8	5
1	4	8	7	2	5	6	9	3
6	9	5	1	3	8	2	7	4
9	5	6	2	8	4	7	3	1
4	8	1	3	7	9	5	6	2
3	7	2	5	6	1	8	4	9
5	1	7	6	4	3	9	2	8
8	6	4	9	5	2	3	1	7
2	3	9	8	1	7	4	5	6

Difficulty Level ★ 1/14

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

DREAMCATCHERS **Solution: 8 letters**

F	E	F	V	I	N	E	S	P	E	E	L	S	E	I
C	I	T	I	G	H	T	M	S	T	R	A	N	D	S
C	I	B	A	R	T	F	A	R	C	C	O	E	A	Y
E	E	T	E	R	S	T	E	N	R	I	N	O	M	M
G	V	N	N	R	O	T	R	E	T	T	E	H	D	B
O	A	O	T	E	E	C	D	C	I	R	V	S	N	O
O	W	F	B	E	H	D	E	F	W	A	O	W	A	L
D	E	P	P	A	R	T	I	D	E	D	W	O	H	H
E	P	A	H	S	O	C	U	P	B	I	I	N	E	O
V	P	A	T	R	A	H	Y	A	S	T	L	S	F	L
I	I	(D)	P	T	A	A	B	P	S	I	L	D	R	E
T	H	(O)	I	N	R	Y	I	I	D	O	O	A	A	K
A	C	(O)	G	N	I	R	T	S	E	N	W	W	M	A
N	N	(W)	Q	U	A	R	T	Z	B	S	I	N	E	W
H	E	R	L	L	A	M	S	S	O	J	I	B	W	A

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Above, Artist, Authentic, Awake, Baby, Beds, Center, Chippewa, Craft, Dawn, Decorate, Dreams, Fiber, First, Frame, Good, Handmade, Hang, Hole, Identification, Native, Nets, Ojibwa, Protection, Quartz, Sacred, Shape, Sinew, Sleep, Small, Snowshoe, Spider, Spiral, Strands, String, Symbol, Tight, Traditions, Trapped, Vines, Webs, Willow, Wood, Woven, Yarn

Yesterday's Answer: Postcard

Treasury 4 is available to order by sending check or money order for $10.95 plus $3.25 postage and handling ($14.20 total, U.S. funds only) for the first volume, $1.50 p&h for each additional volume, to Universal Press Syndicate, Attn: Wonderword, 4520 Main St., Kansas City, Mo. 64111 or call toll-free, 1-800-255-5734, ext. 6668. Order online at upuzzles.com.

CLASSIFIED ADS

CLASSIFIEDS RATES AND POLICIES

Saipan Tribune's Classifieds Section gives you the right exposure without hurting your pockets. Stretch your dollar and get results.

CLASSIFIED ADS

Saipan Tribune also offers a Super Saver Package—a complete 7-day run on both print and online edition, for as low as $25 per 3 liner ad for garage sales, apartment rentals, help wanted, auto and more. You can choose from any of below packages that fits your budget.

ADS (7DAYS)	COMBO (PRINT AND ONLINE)
• 3-Liner	**$25**
• 5-Liner	**$35**
• 3-Liner with picture	**$45**
• 5-Liner with picture	**$55**

JOB VACANCY ANNOUNCEMENT

As added service to our valued customers, you may now submit all your JVA placements for announcement/publication in *Saipan Tribune's* print and online edition and KZMI/KCNM at the same time. No more worries of having to go to two different locations every time you need to place job vacancy announcements. Special rates are available for JVA customers under this arrangement.

Print*

• 1st position	**$10**
• 2nd position	**$3**
• Succeeding positions	**$1**

Combo (Print and Online)*

• 1st position	**$13**
• 2nd position	**$4**
• Succeeding positions	**$2**

LOWER RATES! Effective Feb. 3, 2007

Radio (KCNM/KZMI)

• Up to 6 positions	**$5**
• More than 6 positions	**$10**

*These rates apply to all vacancy announcements that include corresponding benefits and which announcements are all under the same company name.

ADVERTISING DEADLINE

Classified Ads

Ads must be submitted before 12 noon 2 days prior to publication date

Job Vacancy Announcements

Monday Through Friday Issues: All ads placed before 12 noon will come out the next publication date.

Saturday And Sunday Issues:

- *Saipan Tribune:* All ads placed Friday before 12 noon will come out Saturday issue and anything placed thereafter will be published on either Sunday or Monday issues.
- KCNM/KZMI: All ads placed on Friday (9am to 5pm) will be for Monday's radio announcement.

CANCELLATION

Classified Ads

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

Job Vacancy Announcements

Cancellations should be made before 12 noon of the day prior to date of publication.

REFUNDS

Refunds will only be made if cancellation deadlines are met. No refunds will be made once ad is already printed.

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Name: Arceli David Carreon/
Dolores Torres Carreon
P.O. Box: 502779 CK
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone No. 288-4493

PRO SE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF ADOPTION FOR: **AUSTIN JAY TORRES CARREON** Minor Child by ARCELI DAVID CARREON AND DOLORES TORRES CARREON Petitioners	FCD AD CIVIL ACTION NO. 07-0712 **NOTICE OF HEARING**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for Adoption for the above-named minor child by Arceli David Carreon and Dolores Torres Carreon, was filed with the above-entitled Honorable Court.

A HEARING of said petition for Adoption will held at the above-entitled Honorable Court at Guma Hustisia Building, Susupe, Saipan, NMI, on the 28th day of February, 2008 at 1:30 p.m. or as soon as thereafter.

Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court

/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court

Name: Miguel Cantos Briones and
Cynthia Jeannette C. Briones
P.O. Box: 505174 CK
Saipan, MP 96950
Telephone No. 288-4493

PRO SE

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF ADOPTION FOR: **JASON CARREON BRIONES** Minor Child by MIGUEL CANTOS BRIONES and CYNTHIA JEANNETTE C. BRIONES Petitioners	FCD AD CIVIL ACTION NO. 07-0713 **NOTICE OF HEARING**

PLEASE TAKE NOTICE that a Petition for Adoption for the above-named minor child by Miguel Cantos Briones and Cynthia Jeannette C. Briones was filed with the above-entitled Honorable Court.

A HEARING of said petition for Adoption will held at the above-entitled Honorable Court at Guma Hustisia Building, Susupe, Saipan, NMI, on the 28th day of February, 2008 at 1:30 p.m. or as soon as thereafter.

Bernadita A. Sablan
Clerk of Court

/s/ By: Deputy Clerk of Court

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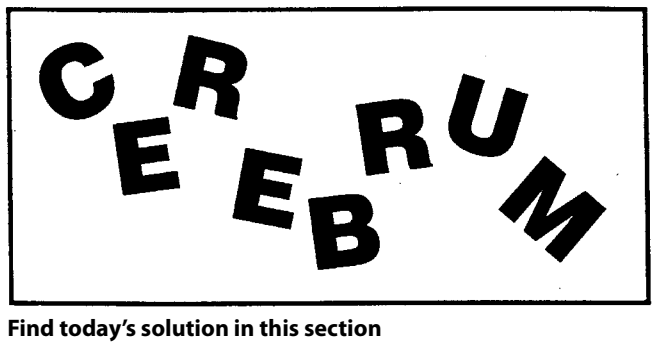

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1 ACCOUNTANT (T 3889)
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1 COMMERCIAL CLEANER (T 3890)
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Coordinator

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce is looking for a methodical and organized individual with initiative and excellent interpersonal and communication skills.

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- Supporting the Executive Director, Board of Directors, committees, and members

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- Competence in Microsoft Word, Excel, and Outlook; working knowledge of computers and other office equipment
- College AA degree and/or office management experience desirable

Salary commensurate with experience. Application deadline is **Friday, January 18, 2008**. Application form available at the Saipan Chamber of Commerce office, Family Building, Garapan Street, Garapan, or online at www.saipanchamber.com.

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1 SALES REPRESENTATIVE (T 3898)
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4 COOK (T 3907)
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1 ADMINISTRATIVE ASST. (T 3914)
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2 WAREHOUSE WORKER (T 3915)
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1 COOK (T 3917)
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1 MANAGER (T 3920)
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Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands
NORTHERN MARIANAS HOUSING CORPORATION

NMHC ITB 08-002 PURCHASE OF ADULT BOOKS

The Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Board of Directors through its Chairman of the Board is soliciting competitive sealed bids from interested vendors for the purchase of adult books for the Tinian Public Library.

Copies of the Scope of Work may be obtained at the Northern Marianas Housing Corporation (NMHC) Central Office in Garapan, Saipan during regular business hours, Monday thru Friday except CNMI Holidays.

Sealed bids must be marked "NMHC ITB-07-010" For bidders within the CNMI, an original and three (3) copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, Mariana Islands 96950, no later than **10:00 a.m., local time, January 18, 2008.**

Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to bid. Notices of Intent to bid must be received by the Director of Procurement and Supply no later than 10:00 a.m. local time January 18, 2008, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via email to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and three (3) copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than January 18, 2008, **AND** must be received no later than January 30, 2008. **Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.**

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement of Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 10:00 a.m., local time January 31, 2008. However, if no notices of intent to bid were received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 10:00 a.m. local time on January 18, 2008.

Bidding procedures shall be in compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, however, Article 7, "Local Business Preference", as amended by Public Law 15-95 and as further amended by Public Law 15-118, is not available because its use is prohibited by the Federal law granting the funding for this procurement. This project is funded by a grant from the U. S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), under its Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) provided to the Commonwealth. This project is also subject to Section 3 of the Housing and Community Development Act of 1968 which requires recipients of HUD funds to help insure that the economic opportunities generated by these HUD funds are provided to local low-income residents and the businesses that serve them "to the maximum extent feasible."

NMHC further notifies all bidders that it will affirmatively ensure that in any contracts entered into pursuant to this advertisement, minority and women-owned business enterprises (MBE/WBE) are afforded equal opportunity to submit bids and will not be discriminated against on grounds of race, color, religion, gender, age, disability or national origin.

The Government reserves the right to reject any and all proposals and to waive any defects in the said proposals, if in the sole opinion of NMHC, to do so would be in its best interest. All proposals will become the property of the Government.

/s/ Manuel A. Sablan
Chairman of the Board

/s/ Herman S. Sablan
Director, Procurement & Supply

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Chargers stun Colts, make date with Pats

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Gone—Peyton Manning, Marvin Harrison, Adam Vinatieri and the rest of the Colts. By stunning Indianapolis, the San Diego Chargers just knocked off New England's biggest road block to the Super Bowl. Now San Diego must avoid a repeat of its last performance at New England.

That will be especially difficult without an injured LaDainian Tomlinson, who departed in the first half with a bruised left knee, and starting quarterback Philip Rivers, who went out in the third quarter with a damaged right knee in the Chargers' stunning 28-24 victory Sunday.

With Billy Volek at quarterback and Michael Turner as the main runner, San Diego went 78 yards on eight plays, with Volek sneaking in from the 1 with 4:50 remaining for the lead. The Chargers' big-play defense then held on downs at its 7, and stopped Indy again in the final moments to preserve their eighth straight win.

To make it nine in a row and advance to their second Super Bowl—the other was a loss to San Francisco after the 1994 season—the Chargers will need all the resourcefulness they showed at Indianapolis. Being undermanned against undefeated New England hardly is an enticing prospect.

Still, with All-Pro cornerback Antonio Cromartie getting an interception and fumble recovery, and linebackers Shawne Merriman and Shaun Phillips plaguing Manning, the Chargers showed they have the ability to throw off any offense. Maybe even the most prolific attack in NFL history.

The Chargers didn't come close against the Patriots in Week 2, falling 38-14. That was the beginning of a slide to 5-5 for San Diego, but the Chargers (13-5) are rolling now.

"A lot's happened since then," Patriots coach Bill Belichick said. "We'll definitely start all over on the preparations. It's like it's a new team."

AP

San Diego Chargers linebacker Shawne Merriman (56) celebrates after the Chargers stopped the Indianapolis Colts short of the goal line in the fourth quarter of an NFL divisional playoff football game Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008, in Indianapolis.

It was a gutty showing by Rivers, who threw for three scores—he banged his right knee on a 56-yard screen pass TD by Darren Sproles to end the third quarter. And Turner, who could be a starter elsewhere but usually sits behind league rushing leader Tomlinson, gave the offense the balance it desperately needed in the late stages of the upset, rushing for 71 yards.

The Chargers' opportunistic defense, which led the league in takeaways (48) and turnover margin (plus-24), grabbed two interceptions—both on tipped balls—and a fumble. While San Diego couldn't stop Manning's offense from steadily marching downfield most of the game, it could make the key plays that get you closer to the Super Bowl.

Still, if Tomlinson is limited or sidelined, how much chance do the Chargers have against the perfect Patriots? Not to mention perhaps missing Rivers or tight end Antonio Gates, who courageously played much of the day on a dislocated toe.

For the Colts (13-4), it was a bitterly quick elimination from the postseason.

A year ago, they won three playoff games, then beat Chicago in the Super Bowl. They couldn't recapture their touch on offense or defense this time, and a defense that allowed the fewest points during the season wore down against the equally physical Chargers.

Still, the Colts went in front 24-21 when Gonzalez slipped past Marlon McCree down the left sideline to complete a 55-yard scoring play with 10:07 to go. Chargers coach Norv Turner challenged that Gonzalez stepped out of bounds at about the 25, but the play stood.

So San Diego's backups then won it, helped by a 27-yard screen pass to rookie Legedu Naanee and a 15-yard face-mask penalty against Indianapolis cornerback Marlin Jackson.

Manning did throw for 402 yards, completing 33 of his 48 throws, but both interceptions killed deep scoring threats.

Rivers was 14-of-19 for 264 yards, and Volek went 3-of-4 for 48 yards in his clutch relief role. Vincent Jackson became Rivers' top target with Gates struggling, and had seven catches for 93 yards and a score.

Giants 21, Cowboys 17

At Irving, Texas, Tony Romo can go wherever he wants with Jessica Simpson now. Eli Manning and the New York Giants knocked him and the Dallas Cowboys into the offseason.

Having to wait out long, slow drives by Dallas, Manning made his few chances count, throwing two touchdown passes to Amani Toomer and getting a 1-yard touchdown run from Brandon Jacobs for a victory that put New York into the NFC championship game for the first time since the 2000 season.

"I won't get tired of hearing that this week," Manning said. "No one's given us much credit and probably still won't. But that's OK. We like it that way."

Manning is heading to his first NFC championship game, at Green Bay next Sunday. Manning had a much better day than his brother, Peyton, whose Indianapolis Colts were stunned by the San Diego Chargers.

"I know he was watching and rooting for me," said Eli, who was 12-of-18 for 163 yards.

Cornerback R.W. McQuarters intercepted a pass into the end zone with 9 seconds left, turning away a last-ditch drive by Romo. It marked his second straight disappointing finish to a playoff game, following his flubbed hold of a short field goal in Seattle last January.

"It hurts," said Romo, who was 18-of-36 for 201 yards with a touchdown. "It's tough right now."

Terrell Owens came to his quarterback's defense, even crying behind dark sunglasses with a quivering bottom lip while declaring, "You can point the finger at him, you can talk about the vacation (with Simpson), and if you do that, it's really unfair. That's my teammate. ... We lost as a team."

Dallas' failure is huge.

The Cowboys just wasted a 13-3 season, which matched the best in team history. They're the first No. 1 seed in the NFC to lose in this round since the NFL went to the 12-team playoff format in 1990. They also became the seventh team to lose a playoff game against a team they'd beaten twice in the regular season—joining Dallas' 1998 club.

Worst of all is the extension of all the skids: Romo now 0-2 in the playoffs, coach Wade Phillips 0-4 and the team 0-for-the-postseason since winning a wild-card game in 1996. The Cowboys have dropped five games since.

The Cowboys might be headed into a stormy offseason. Team owner Jerry Jones said Thursday he would keep Phillips regardless of what happened in the playoffs. Now that will be tested, especially with highly valued assistant coaches Jason Garrett and Tony Sparano interviewing for jobs elsewhere.

Critics may point to Romo's trip to Mexico last weekend with his latest celebrity girlfriend as a disruption, but the problems went a lot deeper. There were all kinds of penalties that hurt Dallas drives and helped New York's, sloppy tackling on defense and special teams, dropped passes and wasted timeouts.

Williams opens title defense with win

MELBOURNE, Australia (AP)—The difference in 12 months was easy to see.

Serena Williams, wearing fuchsia bicycle shorts and headband, a short white dress and dangling, chandelier-inspired earrings, found her form quickly and beat Jarmila Gajdosova 6-3, 6-3 on Monday in the first match in the Australian Open.

Last year, Williams was unseeded, ranked 81st and coming off one of her worst losses on tour—in a Tier 4 event at Hobart—yet she beat six seeded players en route to the title at Melbourne Park. It was her eighth, and least expected, Grand Slam win.

Two former champions who were absent last year advanced to the second round this time, with top-ranked Justine Henin beating Japan's Aiko Nakamura 6-2, 6-2, and 2000 winner Linsday Davenport holding off Italy's Sara Errani 6-2, 3-6, 7-5.

Third-seeded Jelena Jankovic saved three match points and needed 3 hours, 9 minutes to edge Austria's Tamira Paszek 2-6, 6-2, 12-10. The deciding set was 4 minutes shy of 2 hours, included 15 breaks of serve and an injury timeout for each player.

Few expected Williams to win the last title. But expectations—hers and the pundits—are much higher this season.

"It's obviously a lot different—I'm not No. 81 any more. And the court's different—it's a different color," Williams told the crowd after her 62-minute match at Rod Laver Arena against wild-card entry Gajdosova, a Slovak who is representing Australia.

"I thought about last year, you know, my last match on that court I was able to win it—and that's all I thought about. I didn't think about holding up the trophy, I just got right back into the swing of things and thought, 'I have to stay focused.'"

Henin, in her first match at Melbourne Park since retiring from the 2006 final against Amelie Mauresmo, took the last six games against Nakamura to notch her 29th consecutive win.

She was going through a divorce and skipped the last Australian Open, then came back to win the French and U.S. Opens and the season-ending championship. Her only loss in six months was to Marion Bartoli in the Wimbledon semifinals.

She won the Sydney International title Friday to continue her streak.

"It was tough at the beginning because ... it was a little bit windy and she had a game that wasn't easy for me," Henin said. "The first round is not my favorite one, so I'm glad it's behind me now."

Davenport, who was pregnant with her first child and on a break from the tour this time last year, came into the tournament with three titles and an 18-1 record since returning from the birth of her son, Jagger, last June.

Two of those titles followed wins over Errani. The Italian player made her work harder this time, breaking Davenport's serve twice in the third set and saving two match points before putting a forehand into the net after 2 hours, 19 minutes.

Davenport's 49 winners was one more than the number of her unforced errors in an erratic match.

Her low ranking, No. 52, meant the winner of 54 tour titles was unseeded for the draw and put her on a collision course with last year's runner-up, Maria Sharapova, in the second round. Sharapova was to play Jelena Kostanic Tosic later Monday.

On the men's side, sixth-ranked Andy Roddick advanced with a 6-3, 6-4, 7-5 victory over Czech qualifier Lukas Dlouhy, who self-destructed with 12 double-faults in the first two sets.

Although he pounded 28 winners and committed just 11 unforced errors, Roddick needed to ride his big first serve into the second round, as the aggressive Dlouhy often had him on his back foot.

Second-ranked Rafael Nadal, the only player to beat Roger Federer at the last 10 Grand Slams—at the last two French Opens—played Viktor Troicki of Serbia and No. 9 Andy Murray had a challenging opener against Jo-Wilfried Tsonga of France.

No. 11 Tommy Robredo rallied to fend off Mischa Zverev 4-6, 2-6, 7-6 (2), 6-4, 7-5; No. 24 Jarkko Nieminen outlasted Canada's Frank Dancevic 6-3, 6-1, 5-7, 2-6, 6-1; and No. 28 Gilles Simon beat American Bobby Reynolds 4-6, 6-4, 6-2, 6-7 (3), 6-4.

In a match between two former finalists, 2003 runner-up Rainer Schuettler of Germany beat 2001 runner-up Arnaud Clement of France 6-4, 6-2, 6-7 (3), 6-4; while Mardy Fish, who combined with Serena Williams in the United States' Hopman Cup-winning team earlier this month, beat Serbia's Boris Pashanski 6-2, 6-3, 3-6, 6-3.

K.J. Choi holds on to win Sony Open

HONOLULU (AP)—K.J. Choi had to work harder than he imagined to become the Sony Open champion everyone expected.

Equipped with a four-shot lead, Choi struggled in blustery conditions Sunday at Waialae Country Club and held off a late charge by Rory Sabbatini to close with a 1-over 71, the first Sony Open champion in 41 years with a final round over par.

That was more a testament to the wind that caused palm trees to sway and made birdies scarce. Sabbatini managed six of them in a spirited run at Choi, but he three-putted the final hole for par from 65 feet for a 68, leaving him three shots behind.

Choi won for the seventh time on the PGA Tour, and for the fourth consecutive season. Tiger Woods, Phil Mickelson and Vijay Singh are the only other players with active streaks that long.

But it wasn't easy until the end. Choi didn't make his first birdie until the final hole when the outcome was no longer in doubt. He finished at 14-under 266 and earned $954,000.

Sabbatini started six shots behind, took a double bogey on No. 8, and still managed to make a game of it.

He had six birdies, the final one a sand wedge to 4 feet on the 16th to get within two shots, as Choi was struggling to make par three groups behind him. Choi settled down with a par from just off the 16th green, a chip that caught part of the cup on the 17th, and breathing room when he stepped on the 18th tee with a two-shot lead.

Jerry Kelly closed with a bogey-free 67 to finish alone in third.

The last Sony Open champion to close with a round over par was Dudley Wysong, who beat Billy Casper in a playoff in 1967. Conditions had been mostly calm all week, but the wind gusted across Waialae all day, and only eight players broke par.

"Being lulled to sleep for three days made it tougher," Kelly said. "If we would have been facing this all week, we might have seen more rounds like that. I'll tell you, I'd hate to be a rookie and just all of a sudden see this place Sunday."

One such rookie was Tim Wilkinson, the 29-year-old from New Zealand playing in only his third PGA Tour event, and starting off in the final group with Choi after a third-round 62. Wilkinson started off with a bogey and it went badly from there. He shot 78 to tie for 25th.

K.J. Choi, of South Korea, holds the trophy after winning the Sony Open golf tournament at the Waialae Country Club, Sunday, Jan. 13, 2008 in Honolulu.

AP

Choi only had two birdie putts inside 15 feet in the final round, both on the par 5s. He missed a 3 1/2-footer on No. 9 that gave the field hope, and made the last one that only determined the margin of victory.

Choi, a 37-year-old from South Korea, became the first outright wire-to-wire winner at the Sony Open since Paul Azinger in 2000.

Steve Stricker birdied the last hole for a 70 and finished in a tie for fourth with Stephen Marino (72), Pat Perez (70) and Kevin Na, who made eagle on the final hole for a 72. Stricker started his year with consecutive top 5s.

Sabbatini can't complain about his start, either.

"All things considered, I'm really looking forward to the rest of the season," he said.

Sabbatini knew he would need help from Choi, and the South Korean nearly obliged except for a putter that bailed him out early.

Choi holed a 12-foot putt to save par on the opening hole. He couldn't reach the green from the thick rough on No. 2, but again escaped with par with a pitch from 60 yards and a 12-foot putt. After he pulled his tee shot left of the bunker on the par-3 fourth, he came up short and into the sand, and had to make an 8-foot putt for bogey.

Fortunately for him, no one was making a run.

Sabbatini's bid was slowed when his 2-iron off the tee at No. 8 struck a tree and dropped into a hazard, leading to double bogey. That put him put him six shots behind, but he kept plugging away, trying to keep it close, hopeful of Choi making a mistake.

It was a little of both.

Sabbatini bounced back with a birdie on the par-5 ninth and a 10-foot birdie on the 11th, and he was back in the picture for good when his 35-foot birdie on the 13th bang into the back of the cup.

That's where Choi added some drama into the final round. It looked like he would finish the 13th with another two-putt par until he missed from 3 feet - his first three-putt of the tournament. Sabbatini dropped another shot on the 15th, but showed no quit with a brilliant approach to a front pin on the 16th to 4 feet.

His hopes ended with a shot into the sun that he never saw, the ball landing at the back end of the green some 65 feet away for eagle. Sabbatini left it 8 feet short and missed that to the right.

Kelly had a remarkable bogey-free round, and the consolation was a third-place finish. Kelly came into the week at No. 64 in the world ranking, and he will move into the mid-50s with only four weeks before the deadline to qualify for the Accenture Match Play Championship.

"I'm aware of that, but I'm not worried about it," Kelly said. "I've always paid too much attention to everything. I'm trying to get away from the future and the past, because I've handled both of them poorly."

Knicks maul road-weary Pistons, 89-65

NEW YORK (AP)—Zach Randolph had 25 points and eight rebounds and the New York Knicks rolled to an 89-65 victory over the weary Detroit Pistons in the NBA on Sunday.

With the Pistons playing the finale of a four-game, five-night road trip, the Knicks earned their most lopsided victory of the season, giving coach Isiah Thomas a rare easy night—against his former team, no less.

Detroit needed a three-point play by Amir Johnson to avoid finishing with the lowest point total in franchise history. The Pistons shot 30.7 percent (23-of-75), matching the NBA low for field goals made in a game this season.

Antonio McDyess had 15 points and 13 rebounds, and Chauncey Billups scored 14 points for Detroit.

Jamal Crawford scored all of his 15 points in the third quarter, when the Knicks turned it into a blowout.

Raptors 116, Trail Blazers 109, 2OT

At Toronto, Chris Bosh had 38 points and 14 rebounds, and Toronto handed Portland its second loss in 19 games.

Bosh, who played 55 minutes, scored six points in the second overtime to lead Toronto to its third straight victory.

Brandon Roy had a career-high 33 points and 10 assists for Portland, and made a 3-pointer with 2 seconds left in the first overtime to tie it at 104.

Anthony Parker finished with 25 points for Toronto and Jose Calderon added 22 points and 10 assists to help the Raptors recover after blowing a six-point lead in the final 2 minutes of regulation.

Hawks 105, Bulls 84

At Atlanta, Joe Johnson scored 37 points, including 25 in the first half, and Atlanta beat Chicago to end a 12-game losing streak in the series since April 2004.

The Hawks built a 22-point lead in the first half and never let the Bulls mount a serious comeback.

Luol Deng led Chicago with 28 points in his return from missing three games with a sore Achilles' tendon.

Hornets 87, Rockets 82

At Houston, Chris Paul had 19 points and 11 assists and made four free throws in the final 15 seconds to lift New Orleans to the win.

David West scored 26 points and grabbed 12 rebounds for the Hornets, who snapped Houston's five-game winning streak.

Yao Ming had 30 points, 16 rebounds and six turnovers for the Rockets.

Tyson Chandler grabbed 14 rebounds for New Orleans.

Warriors 106, Pacers 101

At Oakland, California, Monta Ellis scored nine of his 29 points during a fourth-quarter comeback, and Mike Dunleavy missed a key free throw for Indiana in the final seconds.

Baron Davis scored 27 points for Golden State, which erased Indiana's early 17-point lead and hung on.

Jermaine O'Neal had 27 points and nine rebounds for the Pacers. Dunleavy had 18 points and 10 rebounds, but missed a potential tying free throw late in the game.

Lakers 100, Grizzlies 99

At Los Angeles, Kobe Bryant scored 37 points, Kwame Brown made a foul shot with 9.2 seconds remaining, and Los Angeles won its sixth straight match at the expense of Memphis.

Brown, a 38-percent foul shooter, connected on his first attempt to give the Lakers a 100-99 lead before missing the second.

The win was the 944th of Lakers coach Phil Jackson's career, tying him with Bill Fitch, his coach at the University of North Dakota, for sixth place on the NBA's all-time list.

Mike Miller scored 27 points and Pau Gasol had 21 points and a season-high 18 rebounds and eight assists for the Grizzlies, who lost their fourth straight game.

Cavaliers' LeBron James ticketed for driving 101 mph on highway

MEDINA, Ohio (AP)—NBA star LeBron James was ticketed by the Ohio State Highway Patrol for driving 101 mph (163 kph) on an interstate highway.

James was cited in a 65 mph (105 kph) zone on Interstate 71 near Medina at 2:43 a.m. on Dec. 30—his 23rd birthday.

Cleveland attorney Colin Jennings filed a not guilty plea for James on Tuesday in Medina Municipal Court. A hearing is scheduled for Feb. 11, the same day James' Cleveland Cavaliers are scheduled to play in Orlando against the Magic.

Other details about the traffic stop were not available.

Medina is about 30 miles (50 kilometers) south of Cleveland.

Saipan Little League meeting today

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Saipan Little League Baseball, Inc. president Juan I. Tenorio is reminding all team managers, coaches or assistants, and other volunteers to attend today's scheduled meeting.

The meeting, to continue the Saipan Little League's preparations for the coming 2008 season, will be held at 6pm at the pavilion beside the Gilbert C. Gymnasium inside the Susupe Sports Complex.

The entrance fee and other required documents like proof of player's eligibility are due on the said meeting.

A total of 10 teams have signified their intention to join the Majors division of the Saipan Little League, which is tentatively set to open on Feb. 7, led by the three-peat seeking Patriots.

The SLLBA is hoping to again tap the support of local businesses for their 2008 season where they plan to again talk to various businesses on Saipan to become their financial supporter.

Aside from soliciting the support of local businesses, the SLLBA board will also hold fundraising activities, as they will let the parents of the kids get involved in the Little League program.

Aside from planning the 2008 season, SLLBA officials, with the help of CNMI Little League district administrator James Ada, will also start their preparation for the hosting of the district and regional tournaments.

Saipan will be hosting Tinian and Rota in the 2008 CNMI District Tournament. The winners of the district tournament will represent the CNMI in the regional meet where they will be facing teams from Guam, Hong Kong, Indonesia, and the Philippines,

Other SLLBA officers are vice president and player agent Michael A. Borja, secretary Bobbie Norita-Techur, treasurer Annie Deleon Guerrero Flores, chief statistician Roque Celis, safety officer Ben Taitano, umpire consultant James Miwata, and managers' representative George N. Camacho.

Indoor volleyball league opens today

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association opens its 2008 season by kicking off its Indoor Winter League today with nine teams competing in the men's division beginning 6pm at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium.

Volleyball tournament regulars Beach Jammers, CH Hammer, No Fear, and Islanders will lead the nine-team cast that also includes Ol'Aces, Menudo, Fanians, Ma Numel'u, and Home Boyz.

Games will be held every Tuesday and Thursday from 6pm to 9pm. The duration of the league will run for nine weeks with the Top 8 teams after the single-elimination round advancing in the playoffs on March 18.

Four games will be played every Tuesday and Thursday where one match would consist of two race-to-25 sets and the third and deciding set is first to make 15.

Fanians open up the season against the Islanders. The 7pm match will have Menudo going up against Hammer, while at 8pm Ma Numel'u will test the Ol'Aces. The 9pm final match will have No Fear battling Home Boyz.

The entrance fee is $10 per team for NMIVA members and $15 for non-members.

A separate women's division will start its games on Tuesday next week, Jan. 22, since there are only three teams that have confirmed participation.

Application and sign up are still open for other interested women's teams and coaches or team representatives. Those interested should call NMIVA president Jon Cramer to submit their lineup and entrance fee not later by 5pm on Thursday.

For more information, call Cramer at 235-6231 at ext. 5148 or e-mail him at seaexec@picsaipan.com or Janice Camacho at 868-9515 or 323-6565 or 66 or 67 or 68 or e-mail her at nonose98@gmail.com.

SGA January Ace this Sunday

The Saipan Golf Association will hold its January Ace of the Month Tournament this Sunday, Dec. 20, at the Coral Ocean Point Golf Resort.

Check-in time for the club's first monthly competition of the year is 8:30am with tee time set 30 minutes later at 9am. Slots will be available for the first 24 entrants.

Anyone interested in joining SGA or need more information about the club, should contact Joe Sablan, Larry Guerrero, and Ben Aldan at 287-4563, 287-1052, or 234-3176, respectively. ***(Mark Rabago)***

Realtors whip Express, gain RP Cup semis

MANILA, Philippines—Boyet Fernandez didn't need a controversial endgame timeout on this one.

In fact, Sta. Lucia Realty was so in synch Sunday night that Fernandez didn't have the need to call time for most of the fourth quarter in a 123-106 victory over Air21 that boosted the Realtors into the semifinals of the Smart PBA Philippine Cup at the Araneta Coliseum in Quezon City.

The Realtors broke away late in the third quarter and sealed their defiance of pre-tournament hype—and expectations—by winning an eighth straight game for a 12-6 slate and a seat in the Final Four in the company of Purefoods.

First Game

Sta. Lucia 123 – Omolon 40, Gonzales 17, Williams 16, Espino 16, Mendoza 12, Aquino 10, Miranda 8, Reyes 4, Coronel 0, Daa 0, Yeo 0.

Air21 106 – Santos 24, Se 22, Canaleta 12, Cruz 10, David 10, Chia 7, Kramer 6, Intal 6, De Ocampo 4, Sotto 3, Arboleda 2.

Quarters: 32-35, 65-59, 96-86, 123-106

Second Game

Talk 'N Text 104 – Ritualo 23, Cardona 20, Washington 16, Aljamal 11, De Ocampo 11, Peek 7, Alapag 5, Allado 5, Belano 4, Carey 2, Barcellano 0, Billones 0.

Barangay Ginebra 87–Caguioa 22, Helterbrand 21, Tubid 9, Mamaril 6, Menk 6, Reavis 6, Macapagal 5, Salvacion 5, Artadi 4, Aquino 3, Escalona 0.

Quarters: 26-16, 52-34, 83-62, 104-87. ***(PDI)***

HEO'S

From Page 26

touring team member William O'Connell. The duo lost their semifinal match.

Heo and O'Connell were beaten by the pair of Andrew Donaldson and Dane McKinnon, 4-6, 3-6, and will play in a third place playoff match against the third seeded duo of de Boer and John Warnock-Bennett.

Top seeds Taylor and McKee won the doubles division after a 6-4, 6-2 win over Donaldson and McKinnon in the finals.

Heo and O'Connell opened with a 6-3, 7-6 win over the pair of Jarrod Liston and Riley Oberin to advance to the Round of 16 where they escaped with a hard-earned 1-6, 6-1, 13-11 triumph over the fourth-seeded tandem of Clow and Nathan Jilich.

Heo and O'Connell cruised past Jack Murray and Tyler Neve, 6-1, 6-4, to barge into the semifinals.

After the tournament, Heo and the rest of the ITF Junior touring team will watch games in the Australian Open at Rod Laver Arena. Heo is expected to be back on Saipan before the end of the month.

Heo also reached the singles division quarterfinals in the 2008 Australia Post Margaret Court Cup then teamed up with O'Connell to make it to the Last 16 in the doubles.

He also entered the semifinal round of the consolation draw of two age divisions in the 2008 Ducats G.V. Junior Tennis Tournament in Shepparton, Australia last week where he lost to tougher opponents from the host team at the Shepparton Lawn Tennis Club.

Heo is competing in his first Australian junior championship tournament after he was invited to become a member of the ITF Pacific Oceania Junior touring team late last year.

Heo received an invitation to join the ITF Pacific-Oceania Junior touring team in Australia last October. He left Saipan last Dec. 27 to join a group of Under-18 players that will travel around Australia from Dec. 30 to Jan. 18.

FIGHTERS

From Page 26

and mixed martial arts teams and gyms to sign up their fighters for the upcoming Rites of Passage event.

Rites of Passage is the proving grounds for up-and-coming young warriors who want to test their MMA skills in front of a smaller crowd and see whether they could make it to big no-holds barred fights inside the octagon.

Rookie warriors who won their fights would get the chance to earn an invitation to Trench Warz VIII, which is tentatively set on June 8.

Sign up sheets in all weight categories for Rites of Passage IV are now available at the Trench Tech Gym. Registration forms can be picked up from Monday to Friday rom 5pm to 8pm.

Rites of Passage IV tickets will be available soon and will be sold for $20. Alvarez said they would notify fight fans of all ticket outlets.

For more information, call Alvarez at 483-4MMA or 483-4662.

After the Rites of Passage IV, Alvarez will hold another All-Island Grappling/Submission Tournament on April 26, which is similar to the "Art of War" All Island Grappling/Submission Challenge.

Trench Warz VIII will be held on June 8 at the Royal Taga Hall at the Saipan World Resort, while Rites of Passage returns for its fifth event on Sept. 27 at the Trench Tech Gym.

The MMA fight season ends with Trench Warz IX on Dec. 6 again at the Royal Taga Hall at the Saipan World Resort.

The dates are subject to change since it is only a tentative schedule.

Saipan's last MMA event was Trench Warz VII: The Invasion last month where Kelvin "The Big Hit" Fitial foiled the revenge bid of Luka "Bad News" Tapua'ialupe Iakopo in the main event.

NMIVA

From Page 26

field where the tandem of Randy Steele and E.J. Lee were crowned champions.

The unique tournament provided some great volleyball action with 14 other teams joining Steele and Lee in the one-day NMIVA-sanctioned competition.

NMIVA is the CNMI's umbrella volleyball association covering all aspects of indoor and outdoor games and players. NMIVA is a bona fide and current member of FIVB and the Northern Marianas Amateur Sports Association.

All NMIVA fundraisers are organized to raise funds for the development of volleyball in the CNMI.

Peterka is encouraging everyone to become a NMIVA member for $20 for the whole year where you could get regular email updates and discounts on all NMIVA-sanctioned volleyball events.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	30	5	.857	–
Toronto	20	17	.541	11
New Jersey	18	18	.500	12 1/2
Philadelphia	14	23	.378	17
New York	10	26	.278	20 1/2

Southeast Division

Orlando	23	16	.590	–
Washington	19	16	.543	2
Atlanta	16	17	.485	4
Charlotte	13	23	.361	8 1/2
Miami	8	28	.222	13 1/2

Central Division

Detroit	28	10	.737	–
Cleveland	19	18	.514	8 1/2
Indiana	17	22	.436	11 1/2
Milwaukee	15	22	.405	12 1/2
Chicago	14	21	.400	12 1/2

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

Dallas	26	11	.703	–
San Antonio	24	11	.686	1
New Orleans	25	12	.676	1
Houston	20	18	.526	6 1/2
Memphis	10	27	.270	16

Northwest Division

Denver	22	13	.629	–
Portland	22	14	.611	1/2
Utah	21	17	.553	2 1/2
Seattle	9	27	.250	13 1/2
Minnesota	5	31	.139	17 1/2

Pacific Division

Phoenix	26	11	.703	–
L.A. Lakers	25	11	.694	1/2
Golden State	22	16	.579	4 1/2
Sacramento	14	21	.400	11
L.A. Clippers	10	23	.303	14

Yesterday's Games

Toronto 116, Portland 109, 2OT
Atlanta 105, Chicago 84
New Orleans 87, Houston 82
New York 89, Detroit 65
Golden State 106, Indiana 101
L.A. Lakers 100, Memphis 99

SONY OPEN SCORES

Final Round

K.J. Choi,	$954,000	64-65-66-71	266
Rory Sabbatini,	$572,400	66-69-66-68	269
Jerry Kelly,	$360,400	67-67-69-67	270
Steve Stricker,	$208,688	71-65-66-70	272
Pat Perez,	$208,688	69-66-67-70	272
Steve Marino,	$208,688	65-67-68-72	272
Kevin Na,	$208,688	67-64-69-72	272
Tom Pernice, Jr.,	$159,000	70-67-66-70	273
Troy Matteson,	$159,000	69-67-65-72	273
Parker McLachlin,	$113,571	73-66-65-70	274
Heath Slocum,	$113,571	65-69-69-71	274
Dustin Johnson,	$113,571	68-68-67-71	274
Fred Funk,	$113,571	69-64-69-72	274
Stephen Ames,	$113,571	70-68-65-71	274
Doug LaBelle II,	$113,571	67-69-66-72	274
Chad Campbell,	$113,571	66-69-66-73	274
George McNeill,	$79,500	68-71-70-66	275
Matt Jones,	$79,500	68-69-68-70	275
J.B. Holmes,	$79,500	68-70-64-73	275
Steve Lowery,	$59,572	66-72-71-67	276
James Driscoll,	$59,5721	66-69-73-68	276
Jim Furyk,	$59,572	68-70-69-69	276
Y.E. Yang,	$59,572	69-68-69-70	276
Jay Williamson,	$59,572	67-68-66-75	276
Chad Collins,	$39,599	67-70-73-67	277
Vaughn Taylor,	$39,599	67-70-69-71	277
Jeff Maggert,	$39,599	69-69-68-71	277
Carl Pettersson,	$39,599	67-68-69-73	277
Shigeki Maruyama,	$39,599	68-68-68-73	277
Mark Wilson,	$39,599	72-65-66-74	277
Tim Wilkinson,	$39,599	68-69-62-78	277
Cameron Beckman,	$28,090	67-71-70-70	278
John Merrick,	$28,090	69-69-69-71	278
Paul Azinger,	$28,090	70-68-69-71	278
Zach Johnson,	$28,090	67-70-69-72	278
Daniel Chopra,	$28,090	66-71-68-73	278
Brad Adamonis,	$28,090	66-68-70-74	278
Jesper Parnevik,	$28,090	69-70-66-73	278
Chez Reavie,	$28,090	68-66-69-75	278
Shane Bertsch,	$20,670	71-66-72-70	279
J.P. Hayes,	$20,670	66-70-71-72	279
Yusaku Miyazato,	$20,670	68-69-69-73	279
Alejandro Canizares,	$20,670	67-67-71-74	279
Brian Gay,	$20,670	67-67-70-75	279
Jason Allred,	$15,518	69-69-74-68	280
Spencer Levin,	$15,518	67-68-73-72	280
Scott Sterling,	$15,518	70-69-69-72	280
Vijay Singh,	$15,518	70-68-69-73	280
Liang Wen-chong,	$15,518	70-66-70-74	280
Robert Gamez,	$12,784	67-70-73-71	281
Sean O'Hair,	$12,784	69-70-71-71	281
Kevin Streelman,	$12,784	68-69-72-72	281
Patrick Sheehan,	$12,784	71-68-69-73	281
Bubba Watson,	$12,784	70-69-67-75	281
John Mallinger,	$11,925	67-72-71-72	282
Kiyoshi Miyazato,	$11,925	69-70-70-73	282
Martin Laird,	$11,925	69-70-70-73	282
Bob Estes,	$11,925	69-66-71-76	282
Jim McGovern,	$11,925	71-65-70-76	282
Tom Lehman,	$11,925	70-68-68-76	282
Mitsuhiro Tateyama,	$11,448	66-70-75-72	283
Briny Baird,	$11,448	68-68-73-74	283
Jimmy Walker,	$11,448	65-68-73-77	283
Daisuke Maruyama,	$11,236	68-69-71-76	284
Matt Kuchar,	$11,130	70-67-73-75	285
Dudley Hart,	$10,971	68-69-74-75	286
John Riegger,	$10,971	67-69-74-76	286
Mark Calcavecchia,	$10,812	68-71-73-75	287

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Stallions' Olita reaps awards

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Oleai Black Stallions' Jun Olita had his own personal celebration after sweeping the individual awards in the Masters division of the Saipan Electronic Darts Association Budweiser Summer/Fall League.

The award ceremony of the Summer/Fall league and the season-ending Bud Light Cup took place last Sunday at the Pacific Islands Club's Charley's Cabaret.

Moments after receiving his trophy for helping the Stallions win the regular season and Bud Light Cup titles; Olita once again stepped on to the stage to collect three individual honors.

Olita captured the High In and Out awards with total scores of 160 and 146 then added the Masters division most valuable player trophy for having the most wins and assists with 54 each.

Nestor De Vera, Gerry Galsote, and Charlie Peters duplicated Olita's feat in the A division with the former winning the High In award with 160. Galsote was the winner in the High Out category with 152, while Peters was named the division MVP with 37 wins and assists.

Luis Ramos and Adriano Sablan were the Tuesday B High In and Out winners with 146 and 123 points while Pam Ybañez and Manny Ada were awarded co-MVPs after both of them had similar 47 wins and assists the whole season.

Greg Sasamoto (160) won the Thursday Bi High In award with Allen Cabrera (117) earning the High Out trophy. Ybañez was again the MVP, but this time shared the honors with Jimmy Tenepere after both of them collected a total of 34 wins and assists.

The C division category winners were John San Nicolas (High In, 140) and Jacob Lizama (High Out, 152). John Cabrera was the division MVP with 21 wins and assists.

Polly Rebelkuul (115) and Martha Mendiola (109) won the High In and High Out honors, while Mary-Lois Blaluk of Ladies division champion Porky's Mixed Porky was named MVP.

Right, a division champion Vargas Snipers pose with their trophies during Sunday's award banquet of the 2007 Summer/Fall Darts League of the Saipan Electronic Darts Association.

Far right, the Oleai Island Mix Shooters celebrate their C division victory in the Bud Light Cup.

Far left, Porky's Mixed Pokie had a double celebration in the Summer/Fall League after also winning the season-ending Bud Light Cup.

Left, the Oleai Black Stallions added the Bud Light Cup to its hardware haul in the Masters division.

Members of the Bud's Hammer Time hold the Thursday B division title after winning the Bud Light Cup.

Members of Thursday B division champion Porky's Porketeers were joined by sponsor Bruce Bateman in collecting their trophies.

Porky's Mixed Pokie sponsor Bruce Bateman, second right, joins his team after collecting the Ladies division crown.

Masters division champion Oleai Black Stallions.

C division regular season champions Jonny's Insane Dart Posse celebrate their win.

Tuesday B champions Bud's 80 Proofers.

Stallions' Olita reaps awards

Oleai Black Stallions' Jun Olita had his own personal celebration after sweeping the individual awards in the Masters division of the Saipan Electronic Darts Association Budweiser Summer/Fall League.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Chargers stun Colts, make date with Pats

Gone–Peyton Manning, Marvin Harrison, Adam Vinatieri and the rest of the Colts. By stunning Indianapolis, the San Diego Chargers just knocked off New England's biggest road block to the Super Bowl.

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Heo's concludes Aussie trip with semifinal loss

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

Ji Hoon Heo's luck ran out yesterday when he lost both his semifinal matches in the singles and doubles division of the boys' 16-and-under at the 2008 CountryLink Victorian Junior Classic at the Wodonga Lawn Tennis Center.

Heo, who previously scored stunning upsets over seeded opponents, finally met his match when he suffered a 2-6, 2-6, loss to second ranked Rory de Boer of Tasmania in the singles division.

De Boer, however, lost to No. 1 Adam Taylor in the finals, 4-6, 6-3, 6-1. Taylor earned the second finals berth after a 6-2, 6-2 win over No. 4 Tulliani.

The 15-year-old Korean-born netter, however, earned some consolation after becoming the only unseeded and non-Australian player that went up against home-grown and top-ranked opponents in the semifinals. Taylor, Tulliani, and de Bouer are all from Australia.

Heo, who advanced to the Round of 32 after opening round foe Matthew Russell withdrew due to injury, began his giant killing ways when he first pulled off a shocking 6-4, 6-2 win over the third seeded Michael McKee.

He then faced Dane McKinnon the following day dispatching his 16th ranked opponent in a 7-5, 6-4 fashion then barged into the semifinals with a 6-4, 6-4 triumph over the seventh seeded Sam Clow.

The same thing happened to Heo in the doubles where he teamed up with fellow International Tennis Federation Pacific Oceania Junior

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Ji Hoon Heo eyes the ball as he prepares for a forehand return in this file photo taken during one of his games in the North Pacific Qualifying last year at the Pacific Islands Club courts.

JON PEREZ

Fighters wanted for Rites of Passage

JON PEREZ
Joe Ngiraibuuch uses an arm choke to force Swain Cangco to tap out in last year's Rites of Passage III: Rise of the Warriors held at the Trench Tech Purebred Saipan Gym.

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

TRENCH TECH

Trench Warz Promotions will kick off its mixed martial arts season with Rites of Passage IV: The Uproar on Feb. 16 at the Trench Tech Purebred Saipan Gym behind Moylan's Insurance in Garapan.

Trench Warz coordinator Cuki Alvarez is inviting all fight clubs

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NMIVA to hold grass volleyball meet on Tinian

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REPORTER

Northern Mariana Islands Volleyball Association is organizing a weekend grass volleyball tournament on Tinian this coming Jan. 19 and 20.

On Saturday, Jan. 19, NMIVA will hold a 14-and-under tournament and the following day, Jan. 20, will hold the Rudy Rudiger tournament. Both games will start at 9am.

Organizers are inviting volleyball enthusiasts and their families to join them on Tinian since it will be a long weekend after Jan. 21 is a holiday in observance of the Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino will also offer special room rates for NMIVA members and their families. Reservations can be made through NMIVA president Jon Cramer or secretary Laurie Peterka no later than 6pm Wednesday, Jan. 16.

Peterka, in an email, said they are working on getting the ferry schedule so they could inform all interested players and NMIVA members that will be traveling to Tinian for the weekend.

"I will post another email as soon as I have a reply from Dynasty. If you would prefer to fly, please locate this information on your own as we will not be handling that for members," Peterka said in the email.

Pre registration for both tournaments is ongoing. For more information call Cramer at 235-6231 ext.5148 or e-mail him at seaexec@pic-saipan.com.

Last Dec. 9, NMIVA held the Inaugural PTI Reverse Co-ed Grass Volleyball Tournament held under the sunny skies of Navy Hill's baseball

See NMIVA on Page 26

RELATED NEWS
Indoor volleyball league opens today.
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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
CNMI National Beach Volleyball coach Russ Quinn goes for a spike in last month's Inaugural Grass Volleyball Tournament at the Navy Hill Field.

Masters baseball playoffs begin tomorrow

By JON PEREZ
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REPORTER

The Masters Baseball League playoff round begins tomorrow with the top-ranked Saipan Stevedore D9ers facing the fourth seeded Viva Poker Korean Dreams at 6:30pm at the Francisco M. Palacios Baseball Field.

Saipan Major League coordinator Tony Rogolifoi said the change of schedule is because the FMP field is undergoing renovation as staff from the Division of Sports and Recreation, led by director Joe Lizama, are putting up new protective nets that would block home run balls from hitting cars at the parking lot or damaging property at the nearby Sun Palace Hotel and Marianas High School.

The D9ers went on an eight-game winning run after suffering a 5-8 loss to the Atty. Johnson Toribiong-sponsored Team Rubak on Nov. 4 to win the pennant.

The D9ers did not lose after that and twice defeated their opening day tormentors. The D9ers got back at Team Rubak when they scored a 14-9 win on Nov. 24 then scored their sixth straight win with a 15-6 decision on Dec. 15.

Team Rubak finished the season in second place with a 6-3 mark followed by the Atty. Bob O'Connor Tigers' 3-6 slate and the 1-8 record of the Korean Dreams.

The Dreams are the clear underdogs in their matchup. Their pitchers need to contain the D9ers' batters while produce more runs in order to pull off a major upset.

The Dreams finished with a 1-8 record with their lone win coming against Tigers on opening day.

The second ranked Rubak clashes with the Tigers on Saturday, Jan. 19, at 9am.

Rubak holds a 2-1 edge against the Tigers where they scored consecutive hard-earned wins on Dec. 1, 19-13, and on Dec. 22, 18-15.

The Tigers avoided a sweep when they defeated Rubak, 21-11, on Jan. 4, which is a make-up game of their Nov. 11 match that was canceled due to rain.

The winners of both playoff matches will advance to the one-game finals on Jan. 23, Wednesday, at 6:30pm.